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LESSONS

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT,

BOSTON:

WALKER, WISE, AND COMPANY,

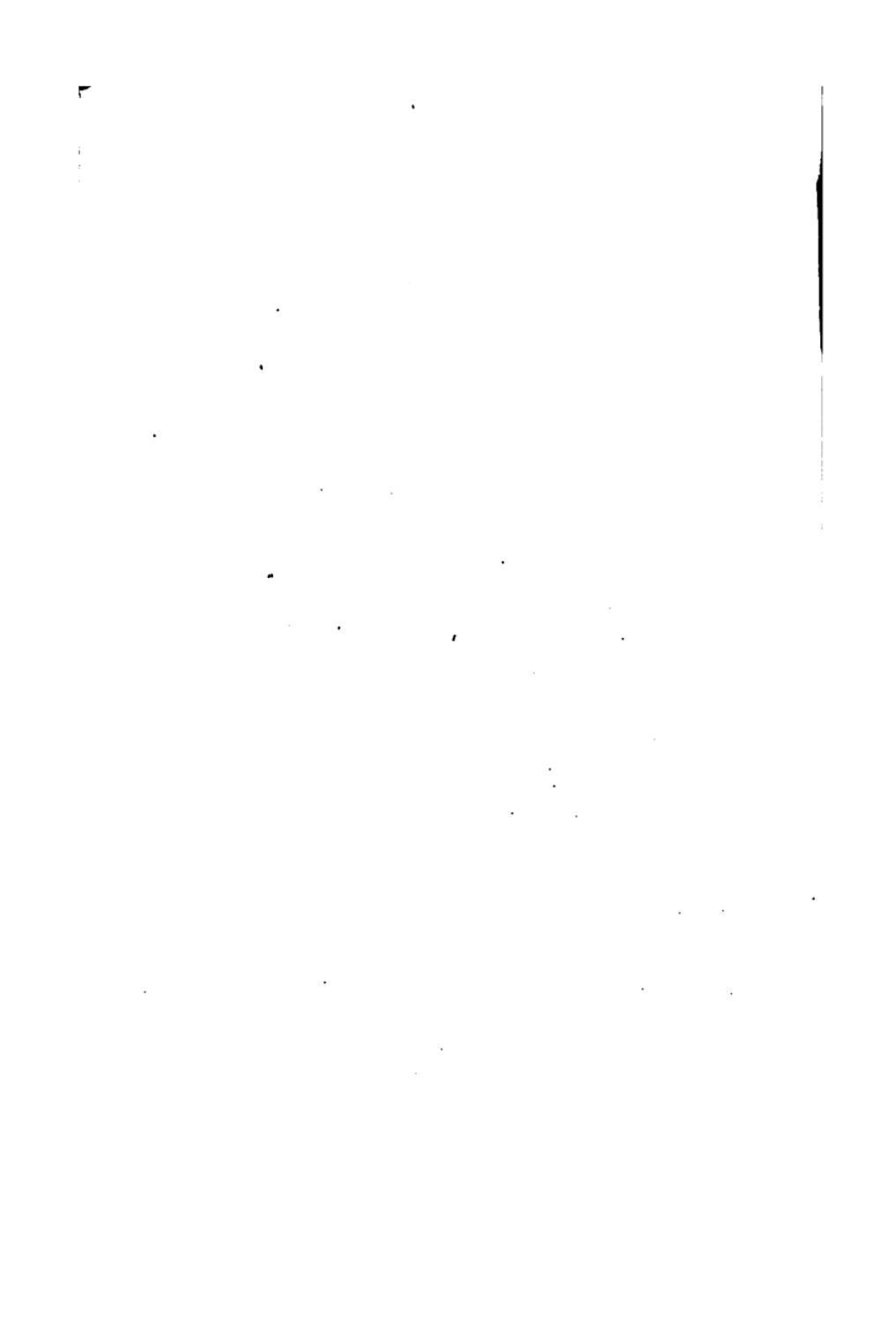
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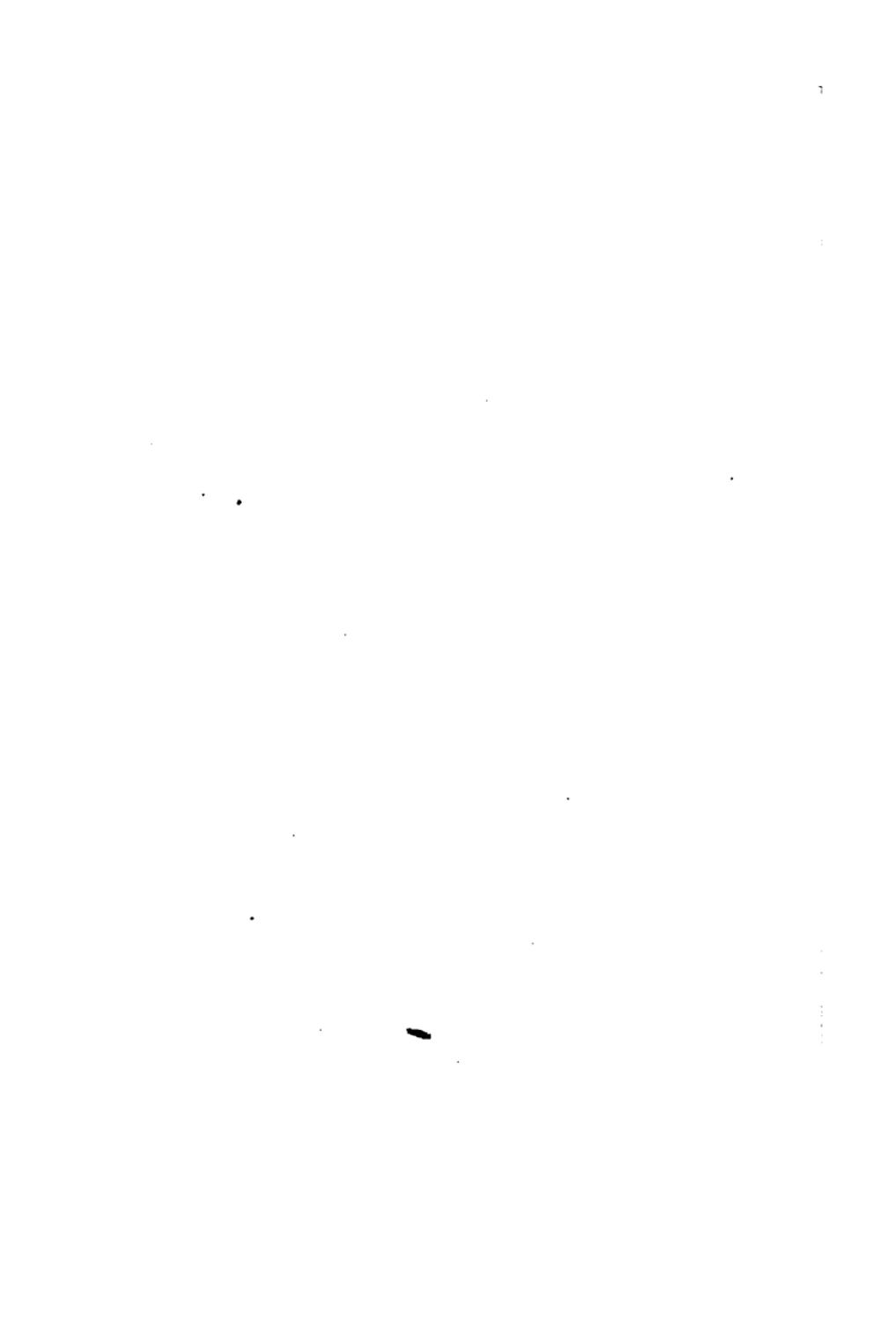
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LESSONS
ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

SEVENTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:
WALKER, WISE, AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK:
CHARLES S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY.

1860.

KC10698



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GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

IN this course of Christian instruction, there are eight text-books, bearing the following titles: — Early Religious Lessons; Palestine and the Hebrew People; Lessons on the Old Testament; Life of Christ; Books and Characters of the New Testament; Religious Duties and Christian Morals; Doctrines of Scripture; Scenes from Christian History.

The first of these is designed to be used — though not to the entire exclusion of other text-books for that period — by all pupils under ten years of age. As children enter the Sunday School at different ages, it seems necessary to leave them, up to a certain period, without a very rigidly determined order of instruction, and more than afterwards under the direction of the individual preferences and judgments of their teachers, in regard to their methods of study. The first manual, consisting of selected passages of Scripture and simple illustrative verses,

is offered to these teachers as an aid to their work. The object here is not so much connection between the parts, as to fasten in the child's mind certain sacred words and truths, fraught with hallowed associations, which may prove a treasury of comfort and suggest themes of devout meditation through the whole of life. *Each exercise is to be thoroughly fixed in the pupil's memory.* It may then be explained and illustrated, according to the teacher's pleasure or opportunity.

At the beginning of each school year, all the pupils within the school, that have arrived at the age of ten within the year preceding, are to be arranged in classes of convenient size, and to be occupied one school year — not more nor less — with Manual No. 2, — “ Palestine and the Hebrew People.”

All pupils that have become eleven years old within the year preceding, are to study for one year Manual No. 3. No. 4 is for scholars between the ages of twelve and thirteen. No. 5 is for those between thirteen and fourteen. No. 6 is for those between fourteen and fifteen. No. 7 is for those between fifteen and sixteen. No. 8 is for those between sixteen and seventeen.

The order of succession in the subjects of study will be observed, and the obvious reasons that prescribe it. The success of the plan, in any given

school, will probably depend much on a strict adherence to this system.

Most of the text-books contain only about thirty lessons each. Room is thus provided for the vacation that is introduced into some Sunday Schools, for unavoidable interruptions within the year, and for a review of the book.

The lessons are of such length that they may be fully recited in about half an hour ; and, to do them justice, not less than that amount of time should be left free from all other occupation in every Sunday School exercise.

The design is that each subject, in the order, shall be thus thoroughly mastered and *understood* by the class ; that, at the close of the year, they may be as well fitted for examination in it, as the classes of our common schools are in their several branches of study. It is earnestly recommended to parents, teachers, and pastors, that they require of the young committed to their charge, and pursuing this course, so much time and application as will accomplish this end. The result, to say nothing of spiritual impressions, would be the possession of a body of Christian information of the utmost value, and such as no youth can remain ignorant of, in a community like ours, without cause for deep reproach.

The names of the writers, arranged alphabetical-

ly, and not according to the order of the books in the course, are as follows: —

Rev. GEO. W. BRIGGS,
“ S. G. BULFINCH,
“ RUFUS ELLIS,
“ EDWARD E. HALE,
“ F. D. HUNTINGTON,
“ JOHN H. MORISON,
“ EPHRAIM PEABODY.

INTRODUCTION.

In preparing this catechism, the single object kept in view has been, to make the pupils who may use it acquainted, as far as may be, with the prominent facts recorded in the Old Testament. There are many questions relating to the authority and authorship, the inspiration and interpretation of its different books, of great importance in themselves, and of great interest to those more advanced in life. A discussion of them, however, would be altogether out of place in a catechism for the young, and they have therefore been avoided. Indeed, the first step towards the understanding of these questions is a knowledge of what the books actually contain. And to gain this knowledge is the first business of a class in the Sunday School.

There are several difficulties to be overcome in preparing a satisfactory catechism on the Old Testament. One arises from the extent of the ground over which the scholar is expected to go, in a limited time. Another arises from the different degrees of capacity and intelligence among the scholars. To meet these difficulties, as far as may be, a brief answer to the questions is given in the catechism itself. This may generally be thought to be sufficient; but in case the book should be used by older scholars, references have been made to those passages of Scripture where a fuller answer may be found. When a class is composed of scholars sufficiently advanced to adopt the latter course, many questions will occur to the teacher, besides

those which are contained in this manual. The attempt has been made, not to provide a book which should supply the place of a teacher, but one which should furnish a basis for instruction, and be a guide and a help to him, while he is left free to modify the course of lessons according to the special wants of his class.

The prefatory remarks which precede some of the lessons are intended for the aid of the teacher, rather than that of the scholar. In giving instruction there are certain general principles which it is important that the teacher should keep in mind, for the double purpose of directing the attention of his pupils to the most important points, and of explaining such difficulties as may be suggested by them. They are principles which, if properly appreciated, will go far towards supplying the place of a commentary.

Besides what will be found in these occasional prefaces, there are several general considerations, never to be lost sight of, in reading the Old Testament.

1. The history is a peculiar one, from the circumstance that it presents itself under a double aspect. It contains an account of the varying fortunes of the Hebrew race, and, at the same time, is a record of the Divine manifestations.

First, it is a history of men, of free beings; of men always remaining as they were created, moral agents; of men made free and left, as all men are, to choose for themselves between evil and good. It is the history, too, of a people in its progress, through centuries, from a semi-savage state up to a high degree of civilization. Their misdeeds, their vices, and their cruelties were owing to their own abuse of their moral freedom, and not to the religion which forbade their crimes. In this respect the Israelites are to be viewed and judged as we should view and judge any other people.

But on another side their history was, in a peculiar sense, a *providential* one. While the Hebrew people were left morally free, they were also elected, chosen, and set apart, as agents to accomplish certain great purposes of God. They were left

personally free, and yet their actions in the result were overruled, so as to accomplish predetermined ends of Providence. In accomplishing these purposes the Israelites were taken as they were. The laws given to them by Moses were not intended to be universal laws for mankind, but were adapted to the actual condition of the Hebrews, and to the great object for which they were set apart from the world. In the same way, the Divine communications made to them were adapted to their actual state. Had the people been different, we may suppose that, in accomplishing the same ends, the Divine methods would have been changed.

Many of the difficulties which perplex the readers of the Old Testament arise from confounding together what was strictly human, the result of the moral freedom of the Israelites, and what was providential. A large part of these difficulties would disappear if a proper discrimination were made between these two elements, which blend together in the current of Hebrew history.

2. Another point of still greater moment is to keep in view the great object for which the Israelites were set apart, and to which all the special revelations of Providence were directed. Much that is mysterious in the means made use of will be cleared up, when we consider their adaptation to the end proposed. That great end was to imprint on the Jewish heart, in such a way that it should never be lost, and as a preparation for the consummation of God's revelations in Jesus Christ, the truth which lies at the foundation of morals and religion, *the supremacy, unity, and moral government of God*. In order to understand the providential government to which the Jews were subjected, we must look, not at the Divine interpositions separately, and by themselves, but in their adaptation to establish this great truth in a world which knew not God.

Critics tell us that, to understand the Old Testament, we must remember that it is made up of different books, written in different ages. Much more important, however, than this, the first thing to be observed is the unity of design which runs

through them all, and makes them a whole. From beginning to end, through History, Proverb, Psalm, Prophecy, connecting all its parts as if by a thread of gold, runs the great idea of God. Every thing is accessory, illustrative, and collateral to this idea. In the Old Testament we find a series of means, extending over fifteen hundred years, — for the Eternal is not in haste, — made use of to imprint on the mind of the world the greatest truth it can receive, and the one without which man can never have any just idea of his destiny. This truth is trusted, not to a book, which might be lost, but stamped on the heart of a nation set apart and divided from others, for that purpose, by peculiar institutions ; intrusted thus to a volume which should have a living voice, which should reproduce itself, and scatter itself over the world. And, in this connection, we may behold a Providence in the selection of the place where the revelation is made. It is at the meeting point of three continents, where the languages of the world meet, while the caravans of Africa and Asia are made unconscious propagators of truth from this geographical centre.

This truth is impressed on the Jewish mind through the most varied methods. Among other methods, it is taught through history. Thus Moses in Genesis, we may believe, does not, like Xenophon or Herodotus, write history for itself, but writes of God in his dealings with man, to show how, in the received and most trustworthy traditions of the past, the presence and moral government of the Creator are always manifest. The historical records contained in Joshua and Judges, in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, are made to illustrate this truth. We are perpetually brought back to the idea of God. Man stands not alone on the earth, but lives under the government of a God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. The Hebrew institutions were arranged, not merely to promote the welfare of the Jewish people, but to preserve in the world this fundamental truth of religion.

The Old Testament has thus the unity which belongs to a definite purpose, and that purpose the highest. The wisdom

of the means is best seen in their adaptation to accomplish the end proposed. So far as man is concerned, nothing could be more essential to his welfare than that he should have just ideas of his relations, duties, and destiny, as a spiritual being. And the wisdom of the methods of which Almighty God saw fit to make use appears in the fact, that, without any interference with man's moral freedom, they have accomplished their purpose. Except for that series of Divine communications and interpositions, the account of which we have in the Old and New Testaments, what right have we to suppose that we should have had any just ideas of God? or even to suppose that we should not, at this moment, be worshipping the grim monsters of some heathen Pantheon? Asia, Egypt, Greece, Scandinavia, never led men to a knowledge of God. The Bible has done it. To all the cavils of scepticism, to all the objections against parts and fragments, there is one insurmountable answer. It is to this volume that the world owes its best knowledge of God. We find the vindication of the means, in the result accomplished. Admit all the difficulties which any one may affirm to exist, still we come back to the great fact; the end proposed was the most essential conceivable for man, the essential condition of his progressive welfare here and hereafter, and somehow or other the means have accomplished the end.

3. Again, a just understanding of the Old Testament requires that we should view its several parts in their relations to each other, and especially in their bearing on the great end of Providence. Many things which, standing alone, might seem meaningless, or be embarrassed with difficulty, when viewed as a part of a providential history, are full of significance. As an illustration of this, we may take an example burdened by as many perplexities as any one that could well be selected, — the sacrifice of Isaac.

According to the history, Abraham is called upon to make the sacrifice of his child. It should be remarked that this command had in it nothing to jar the moral sense of one in that

age, as it would now in a Christian land. The impression probably made was similar to that now made when duty — which is God's voice — requires a parent to expose a child to some great hazard. And what is more to the point, Abraham was not allowed to consummate the act; a substitute was provided; and apparently the lesson taught was such as ever after to exclude the idea of human sacrifices from the mind of the Jews, so long as they remained faithful to their religion. But even with this qualification, if we look at the command by itself alone, it seems an extraordinary one.

But how stands the case? This event was by no means an isolated one. What we learn from history, Providence fore-saw. Abraham stood at the fountain-head of a series of causes and effects more momentous than any other in the history of mankind. He was to be the father of the religions of civilization. The Jew, the Christian, and, in a certain sense, the Mohammedan, date back to him. His character would influence men through coming ages. Thousands of years after, Paul referred to his unbounded trust in God, as an inspiring and authoritative example. At a period of the world when books were not written, when reverence for the Fathers was great, when tradition handed down from generation to generation their virtues, Providence saw fit to teach, not through the written word, but through a living man. The highest sentiment of religion was exhibited in a man, and through an act such as would never be forgotten, — the sentiment of *faith*, — that sentiment which connects man with God, and without which religion is impossible, — that faith which we so much need, *faith in God*, faith that whatever he commands, whether it accord with our wishes or not, is wise and good, — faith that would bring mankind into harmony with God. This great sentiment in its breadth and its height was inculcated through a living example, and in the most effective way. It was as if God had said to his servant, Have you, indeed, faith in me? Is it a faith that will bear the test? The child which I have given you, — your only child, — can you, if I require it, sur-

render it again to me? And Abraham says, I can! He was not called to make that surrender, but circumstances were so arranged as to make it evident that, if God willed, he could, in obedience to his clear command, give back, with his own hand, what was dearer than his life, — the only child of the Hebrew's hope and love, — give back even him to the Being who had trusted him for a time to his care. It was felt, and has ever been felt, to be the extremest test. The light of that faith has remained shining like a star down the long pathway of Jewish history, rebuking the wavering, strengthening the weak but trusting, told by the Fathers to the children, an example whose power has not yet died out.

Think of Abraham as a mere Chaldee shepherd or chief, and the narrative might seem utterly incredible. But remember what he was, and was to be, to coming times, — look on the event as constituting a turning-point in the great order of Providence, — see its place in a series of lessons on which the welfare of man was to depend, — and we no longer wonder that the nature and importance of a sentiment, which gives life both to morality and religion, was taught in a manner that could never be forgotten. In our misgivings we still look back to faithful Abraham, and our hearts recognize and acknowledge his sublime example of undoubting, self-surrendering confidence in God.

4. There is yet another view of the events recorded in the Old Testament, not to be overlooked. Great as was the truth taught by Moses, and protected and established in the world by his institutions, the Mosaic dispensation was not intended to terminate in itself. It was preparatory to still further and higher revelations of God's providence. The remembrance of this may help us to form a more correct judgment of the prophetical parts of the Old Testament.

The interpretation of the prophecies has always been a source of perplexity to commentators. Nor is it at all surprising. Written in a remote age, relating to men and transactions of which in many cases scarcely any other record sur-

vives, preserved in a language with which we are not familiar, and whose vivid idioms can scarcely be translated into the precise and frozen formulas of our Northern speech, it would be wonderful if the prophecies were free from difficulties.

But granting this, and granting also that there is much uncertainty about the force of particular predictions, one great and indisputable fact remains, that, all together, they awakened among the Jews a singular anticipation of a happier state, to be ushered in by the advent of one holding a peculiar connection with God. Viewed separately, the prophecies may make little impression upon our minds, while viewed in their connection they suggest the sublimest ideas of a Providence. Their real force is not felt till we look at them as forming a part of a long-extended — if we may so term it — prophetic history.

In the Jewish annals we see that there was an order of events in which one thing prepared the way for another; — Abraham, Moses, the peculiarities of the Jewish state, the prophets, under the guidance of Providence, preparing the way for the higher manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. We know historically, that the Jews understood this to be so. Doubtless their expectations were very vague, uncertain, and indistinct. But notwithstanding this, their expectation of a Divine deliverer who was to come was so confident, that in the most disastrous times it kept up the courage of the Jewish heart, and bound the exiled people together by a hope of the future scarcely less powerful than their memories of the past, — a confidence increasing so with time, that, when Jesus appeared, Judea was rocked from side to side with the restless passions of the people made impatient by the delayed coming of the Messiah. This expectation was derived from the prophetic intimations of the Old Testament. To these the Jews and our Saviour alike appealed.

Here, then, is presented a remarkable state of things. It would appear as a matter of fact, that, in the order of his providence, God opened the minds of the Jews to this expectation, — that certain men were raised up and impelled to prophesy

of what was to be, — that in some way there was given to them, to an extent sufficient to awaken the most profound and anxious expectation, a vision of that great event on which the fortunes of the world would turn, and for which their own history, though they then might not see it, was a gradual preparation. These men claimed, and were understood, to speak from a Divine impulse. The Jews recognized that claim, and Christ recognized it. And the expectation which they had thus awakened, was more than met by the coming of our Lord. It is not necessary to say that they were inspired in all they said or did, nor to define the mode or extent of the Divine impulse that moved them. They themselves, perhaps, hardly understood its nature ; they doubtless uttered words which they themselves but inadequately comprehended, and which could not be fully understood till interpreted by the event. But this does not in any way affect the fact that they were moved to speak by a wisdom higher than their own. At any rate, till it is proved that God was not in this wondrous order of events, that he gave no anticipatory intimations, no vision of what was to be, the mind may rest quietly in the faith of so many ages, that the prophets spoke, as they claim, from a Divine impulse, moved thereunto by the Holy Spirit. Were there uncertainty in regard to the meaning of every separate prophecy commonly applied to the Saviour, it would not affect our faith in the supernatural and providential control exercised over the progress of the Hebrew race. The whole dispensation was prophetical ; from the beginning, it was intended that Christ should come and complete this order of Divine communications ; and the whole course of Providence in regard to the Jews was prophetic of this event.

There is nothing more sublime than the gradual unfolding of the great plan of Providence, which ushered in the advent of the Saviour, and few things are more interesting than the manner in which the expectation of that event was awakened. From the earliest times, the Hebrew was made sensible that in some mysterious way he was connected with a course of

events which looked forward to still further manifestations of God. It was promised to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The law brought the Israelite into immediate connection with God, and made him a conscious instrument of the Divine purposes. In the progress of time these expectations of the future took a more definite form. Faith in a coming Deliverer became almost as much a part of the national life as the remembrance of the past. This expectation grew stronger as their fortunes grew darker, — surviving conquest and captivity, and steadily becoming more distinct and more intense. Thus through a long series of centuries we behold a sublime hope, transmitted from generation to generation, uniting ages that were past to ages that were to come, — a hope vague, but confident, and coloring the whole Jewish mind. We see it gradually opening like the dawn, — first the evanescent colors just glancing from the topmost clouds, — then the clearer intimations of the earlier prophets, shooting up like beams of light over the dome of the sky, and flushing into a broader and fuller illumination, as the later prophets uttered their warnings, — and then the cold and cheerless hours before the dawn, when for four hundred years the heart of Judaism waited, but never despaired, till at length, scattering the shadows, the visible centre of the moral world, rose the full-orbed sun, — the Sun of Righteousness, — with healing in his beams.

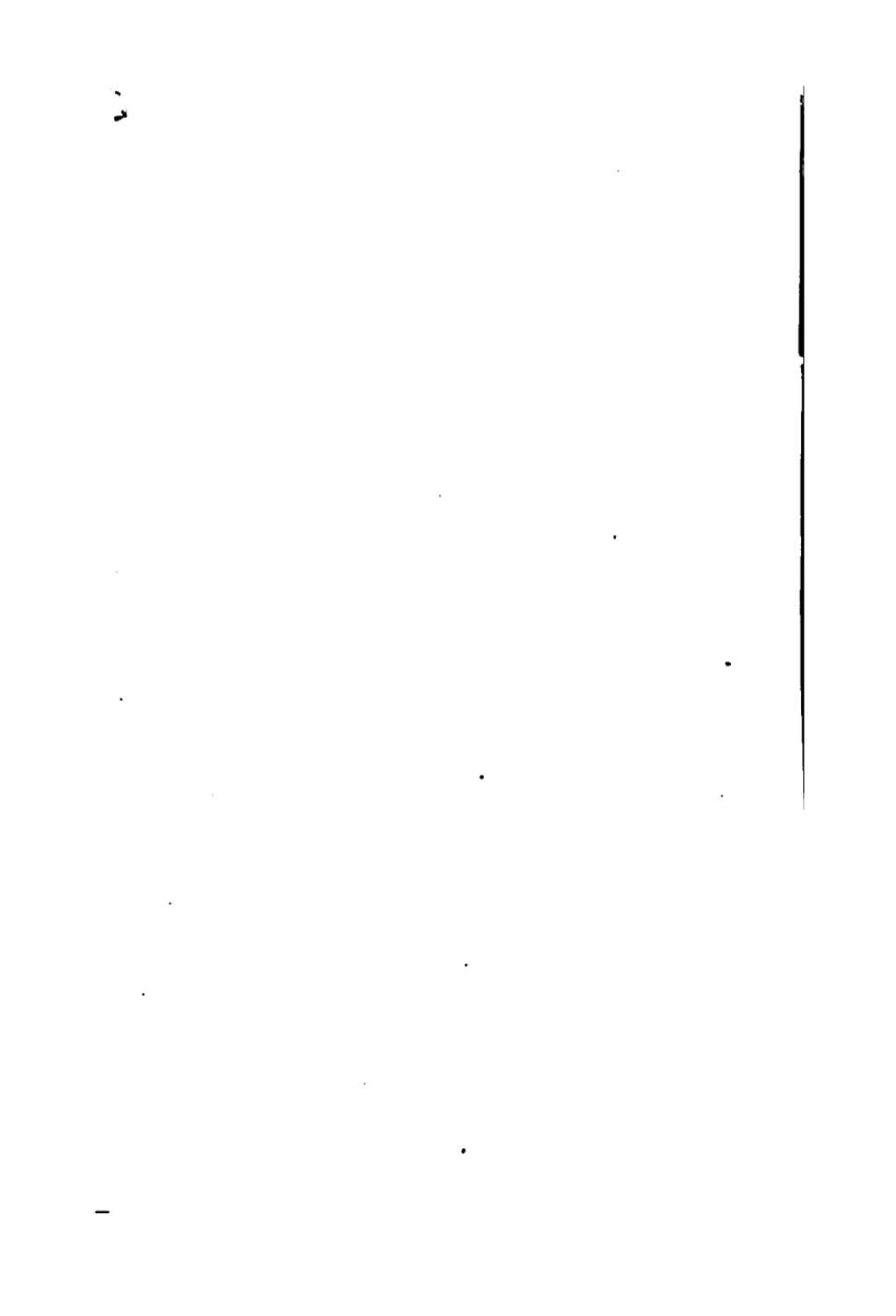
In reading the Old Testament, it is not necessary for one's faith, to settle every conceivable question of chronology or history. There is a larger and a higher view, which makes these questions, as they commonly present themselves, quite unimportant. Take what view we will, there can be no doubt about the general history. It has a singular unity, and that unity brought about by causes as singular. It began in wonderful events, and for fifteen hundred years continued on, until it was consummated in one more wonderful. And when we trace the Hebrew history from the beginning, and see how it was made the introduction to a new and higher order of things,

whose beneficent influence is extending over the world, we acknowledge the presence of Providence, — we behold in this succession of events the controlling hand of God.

In studying the Old Testament, the great benefit which we are to derive from it is a religious one. That mode of criticism which lays the chief stress on the value of its history, or the sublimity of its poetry, mistakes the true point. No doubt the history, as such, is of great interest, but its highest value consists in the fact that no one can read it without having the thoughts directed to the presence and government of that Almighty Power, who not only guides the stars in their courses, but overrules and leads on to blessed ends what seems to us the confused order of events in the moral world.

Its poetry is sublime, but its great value to us consists in its power to fill and refresh the soul with adoring and devout thoughts, which nowhere else have found such adequate expression. Above all, History, Psalm, and Prophecy alike bring the believing mind into the presence of the Almighty Providence, and crowd upon the attention, what we are so slow to heed, the great truth, that in all we do or suffer, in the inward purpose or the outward act, we live under the immediate and moral sovereignty of the Most High.

For those who wish to pursue the study of the Old Testament, there are various works which will be found useful. Among those easily accessible, we may name Noyes's Translation of Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets; Beard's People's Dictionary of the Bible; Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature; Jahn's Archæology, and his Introduction to the Old Testament; De Wette's Introduction; or Dr. Palfrey's recently completed, and very valuable, Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities. We would also recommend a little work, entitled, "Observations on the Bible, for the Use of Young Persons"; which, from its size and from its union of scholarship, religious feeling, and sound judgment, is particularly adapted to be useful in the Sunday School.



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LESSONS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LESSON I.

THE CREATION.—GENESIS, CHAP. I.

THE object of this sublime account of the creation was to teach the great truth which lies at the foundation of all true religion, that there is but *one God*, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and by whom and through whom all things subsist. At the time when Moses wrote, the true God was almost unknown. The world was filled with superstitions, and had gone astray after false gods. The Israelites could hardly be restrained from worshipping a golden calf, as if it were a god. The Egyptians worshipped animals, such as the bull, the crocodile, the snake, and the ibis; nor these only, but they regarded different plants as sacred. Throughout the Eastern world, the sun and moon were thought to be gods, or the abode of gods. One of the principal cities of Egypt was sacred to the sun. Among the Eastern nations, there were those who considered light and darkness as gods. The air, the sea, the groves, had their peculiar deities. Idolatry prevailed throughout the world, and not only did men offer to their false gods flocks and herds and the fruits of the field, but there was scarcely a people on earth which did not at times sacrifice human beings, as the most acceptable of all offerings. There could be no true religion till these superstitions were removed. And hence the first object of Moses was to give

just ideas of God. It was not his purpose to describe *how* the several parts of the world were created, — this was left to the astronomer and geologist of after times, — but to teach man *by whom* they were created. He was a teacher of religion, and not of astronomy. The heavens and the earth, he taught, were created by Jehovah. The light, and the sun, and the stars were not gods, but were created by Jehovah. The animals and plants on the earth owed their origin to Him. And, finally, man was the workmanship of His hand. Not only were the gods whom the heathen worshipped no gods at all, but those objects which so many nations fancied to be gods were created by Him. This truth appears to us to be so simple, that it seems impossible that it should not have always been received. But men have never been able to attain to a satisfactory faith in it unaided by revelation, and its universal reception among us, and our freedom from doubt, are probably owing very much to the manner in which it was taught by Moses.

Many of the worst evils of heathenism grew out of the fact that different races of men were supposed to have a different origin, and to be under the protection of different, and often of conflicting, deities. The strifes of men seemed thus to have a Divine sanction. Moses, on the contrary, taught that there was but one Supreme God, to whom all men, of all lands, must look as their original Creator. In this great doctrine of the unity of God, and the unity of mankind as owing their existence to him, Moses struck at the foundation of the worst evils that have afflicted the world. He prepared the way for the teaching of Christ, that the Creator of all is also the Father of all, and that all men are brethren, and equally dependent on the same God.

Q. By whom were the heavens and the earth created?

A. Gen. i. 1.

Q. What are we taught in the first verse of Genesis ?

Q. Can you mention some of the false gods which the heathen worshipped ?

A. Among the Egyptians, some of their principal gods were adored under the form of animals. The fact that the Israelites had been accustomed to see the image of a sacred calf worshipped in Egypt, probably led them to adopt it for their idol worship. Baal was worshipped by the Canaanitish nations ; while the worship of the heavenly bodies prevailed throughout the East.

Q. Who created the light, and the sun, and the moon ?

Q. Who created the earth, and the plants, and animals upon it ?

Q. By whom was man created ?

Q. Were those objects which the heathens worshipped really gods ?

A. No ; they were either imaginary beings, or creatures inferior to man, or inanimate objects.

Q. What was the purpose of Moses in saying, not only that the heavens and earth were made by Jehovah, but that the sun and moon and stars, and animals and plants, were created by him ?

A. It was to teach that these objects, so far from being really gods, were created by the true God, and that thus, when men looked upon them, they might be led to the worship of the one only and true Creator and Upholder of all things.

Q. What beings were last created and placed upon the earth ?

Q. For what reason may we suppose that Moses dwells upon the fact that the human race owes its origin to Jehovah?

A. Because that fact is the foundation both of piety towards God and good-will towards men.

Q. What authority was given to man over plants and animals?

A. Every moving thing that liveth, and every green herb, shall be meat for you. Gen. ix. 3.

Q. If all men are equally dependent on God for existence, and if his gifts to them were for the benefit of all, how ought they to regard one another?

A. As children of one Father, and as brethren.



LESSON II.

GARDEN OF EDEN.—GENESIS II.—V.

THE great truth set forth in the first chapter of Genesis is, that God is the *Creator* of all things. The next question of infinite interest relates to the *character* of that Being who is over all, and to the relations which he sustains towards man. In the third chapter of Genesis, Moses teaches the great truth that the *Creator* is also the *Moral Governor* of man.

The account of the garden of Eden, though given in the historical form, has been thought by many to be an allegorical description of the moral condition of our first parents, rather than history. But whatever view be taken of it, the moral truth set forth, with which we are chiefly concerned, remains always the same; namely, that as man is now, so he has been

from the beginning, under the moral government of God. At his creation, man was placed under a Divine law; was held responsible to God for his conduct; and his happiness was made to depend on his obedience. As soon as he began to sin, he began to suffer; and in sinning entered on the road of misery and death.

Our first parents, in their early helplessness, were placed in a garden where all their wants were supplied. The Being who had created them provided for their wants. They were innocent, and at peace with each other and with God.

But they were made for more than this life of passive enjoyment. That their moral nature might be developed, they were subjected to a law. What was meant by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of which they were forbidden to eat, we are unable to say. But whatever it might be, the command not to eat was from God; it called into action their reverence for God's authority, and gave to them the idea of duties to be done, as well as pleasures to be enjoyed; while the definite and simple nature of the command fitted it to be a test to themselves of their disposition to obey God. Whatever it was of which they were prohibited to partake, its presence before them was a perpetual trial of their docility, obedience, and reverence. It was the awakening of their moral and religious life.

How long they continued in a state of blissful innocence is not stated. But at length, yielding to temptation, they transgressed the command of their Maker, and in so doing fell from their first estate of blameless peace. This act changed the world for them. They became conscious of guilt. They fled from the presence of God.

What the condition of themselves and their children would have been, had they remained innocent, we have no means of knowing. They might not have needed the discipline of trial, and, like the angels, might have grown up as the children of God. But, as the penalty of guilt, they were expelled from Eden, and doomed to a condition of toil, hardship, and death. It was doubtless necessary, as a means of restraining, pre-

venting, or correcting the evil tendencies of the heart, and of strengthening its better dispositions. But it was none the less a punishment. Through this instructive narrative, Moses teaches that with sin, and as a consequence of sin, toil and suffering and death entered into the world.

But even in the infliction of the penalty they were not left without hope. The serpent was the symbol of moral evil, and the promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head" has been almost universally regarded as a prophetic intimation of the future coming of a Saviour.

Of the children of Adam, three only are mentioned, — Cain, Abel, and Seth. In connection with the former two, we have the first account given of domestic worship. As a symbol of gratitude, they offered to God the first fruits of his gifts. The account is of special importance, because it shows that it is not the offering, but the spirit which prompts it, which makes any sacrifice acceptable to God. The difficulty with Cain was not in his altar, nor in what was laid upon it, but in his own jealous and envious heart. The question, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" explained to Cain, as it does to all men, what God requires as the condition of his approval.

In the account of our first parents, one of the most characteristic facts is that of the near and visible intercourse which Almighty God saw fit to vouchsafe to them. It could hardly have been otherwise. The beings whom he created, he provided for in a way suited to their real wants. He was the Teacher and Guide of their opening faculties, and in their ignorance and helplessness was a Parent to them, who had no parent but him.

Q. What were the names of our first parents?

Q. Where were they placed after they were created?

A. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it." Gen. ii. 15.

Q. By whom were their wants provided for?

Q. Were they allowed to eat the fruit of the trees of the garden? Gen. ii. 16.

Q. Of what alone were they forbidden to eat?

A. Of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Q. In what respect was this command suited to the condition of our first parents?

A. It was so simple that they could understand it, and it furnished a constant test of their disposition to obey God.

Q. Is any thing known respecting the particular tree of which they were forbidden to eat?

A. Nothing beyond what is learned from the narrative in Genesis.

Q. When the serpent tempted the woman, did she fly from the temptation, or listen to it?

A. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Gen. iii. 6.

Q. When we are tempted, and yield to the temptation, in what way are we commonly led into sin?

A. We listen to the temptation, think of it, dwell on the pleasure or gain which it promises, until finally we suffer ourselves to be overcome by it.

Q. When we are in danger of yielding to temptation, what is it wise for us to do?

A. To avoid it, and to give our thoughts to something else,—“to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.”

Q. What penalty was inflicted on our first parents for disobedience?

A. They were cast out of the garden of Eden, and subjected to a condition of labor, suffering, and death.

Q. What is the great religious lesson taught in this narrative?

A. The duty of always obeying God, and the great truth that, from the beginning, suffering has been the consequence of disobedience.

Q. What words do we find which have commonly been supposed to have reference to Christ, and the salvation through him of mankind from the evil which entered into the world with sin?

A. The declaration, that the seed or offspring of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Gen. iii. 15.

Q. What sons of Adam and Eve are mentioned?

A. Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Q. What was the employment of Cain and Abel?

A. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Gen. iv. 1.

Q. Why was not the offering of Cain accepted?

A. It was on account of his envy and jealousy of his brother.

Q. What state of mind does God require in order that our offerings and prayers may be acceptable to him?

A. God requires, not only gratitude to himself, but love to our brother also.



LESSON III.

THE TIME BEFORE ABRAHAM.

In the subsequent traditions recorded by Moses, he still proceeds to show that man, both individually and collectively, is under the immediate government of God, who loves righteousness and abhors iniquity. Throughout the primitive history, it seems to have been the main purpose of Moses to set forth this great moral truth, so that the Israelites might be constantly reminded of it by those circumstances which were likely to make the most impression upon them. Thus the heavens and the earth were made to speak to them of Jehovah, the Creator. The most wonderful traditions of the past were presented in such a way as to teach a lesson of the Divine government. It was no new thing that God should reveal himself and give laws to his creatures. From the beginning, his providence had been over men, rewarding and blessing them when they were obedient to his laws, and punishing them for disobedience. Moses thus endeavored to associate, in the minds of the Israelites, the idea of the Divine supremacy and government, with all the works of nature and with all their memories of their forefathers. This great doctrine of a righteous and overruling Providence was then, and is now, the one which first of all should be stamped ineffaceably on the human heart.

In this providential history, Moses refers to Cain and Abel. Cain slew his brother in the fields. He had nothing to fear from man for this murderous act. But God was witness of the deed, and held him accountable for his brother's blood. The secret crime and the motives of the heart were alike known and open to the all-seeing Providence.

The descendants of Cain seem to have inherited something of his character. One of them, Lamech, is the first who is spoken of as having practised polygamy. He seems to have been a man of violence, for in the fragment of a song, the oldest, perhaps, in existence, he reproaches himself for a deed of blood, while his guilt makes him fear a punishment seven-fold greater than that which fell on Cain.

Of his sons, one was distinguished as the father of those who live in tents; another, as the inventor of musical instruments; and another, as the discoverer of the art of working in brass and iron. These facts are referred to, it is probable, not merely because of their intrinsic interest, but also to prevent the Israelites from being led into certain superstitions of the heathens. In the heathen world, these inventions and discoveries were attributed to the gods,— to Pan or Vulcan, or some corresponding deities. Moses taught, not only that there was no God but Jehovah, but he gives the names of the men who first introduced the use of iron and musical instruments.

In the progress of things the world grew more and more corrupt, until, finally, none but Noah and his family remained faithful. Here Moses still would fix attention on the righteous Providence which rules over the affairs of men. Noah, because of his fidelity, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord"; and the flood, in which a guilty and violent race were swept away, was no result of accident, but was sent by Him who spread out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and holds the waters in the hollow of his hand.

The descendants of Noah rapidly multiplied, and were gradually dispersed over the earth. This, however, does not seem to have taken place at once. For a time, "all were of one lan-

guage and of one speech." And, to prevent their being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," they built on the plain of Shinar a city and a tower, as a common centre around which they might dwell. It was not, however, the purpose of Providence that men should be confined to one spot, but that they should people the world. By a method as simple as it was effective,—the confusion of languages,—He divided them into tribes, and caused them to be scattered abroad upon the earth. Thus it was not through accident, but by the overruling providence of God, that different languages exist among men, and that their tribes are scattered over all lands.

There are portions of this history which it may be difficult for us fully to understand, on account of the Oriental style of narration, but it is essentially simple and natural. It would possess an untold value, if it were viewed merely as the earliest history of the primitive world, and as furnishing some indications of the first stages in the progress of human society. But far more important are the great moral truths which rise, like points of light, above the historical events. To inculcate these truths,—the unity and supremacy of Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, the perpetual providence and moral government of God, the essential unity of the human race, and the moral responsibility of mankind to Him who will judge the world in righteousness,—seems to have been the great purpose of Moses. These truths lie at the foundation of all true religion, of all reliable morality, and of all trustworthy social progress, and in writing of the past Moses seems to have selected those facts which would best illustrate these truths. Our familiarity with the history makes us insensible to its value and to the influence which it has had over mankind. A single fact illustrates its importance, and of itself goes far to answer the objections which have been raised by scepticism,—the fundamental truths of religion and morals which Moses sets forth under such impressive forms have never been generally received by any people which has not also received this history. The history has been like a precious casket, which

preserves truths more precious than itself, — or rather like the ark, in which floated down over the flood the life of the world.

Q. Who was the first murderer ?

A. Cain. Gen. iv. 8.

Q. What was the occasion of Cain's killing his brother ?

A. It was on the occasion of the first recorded act of religious worship. Gen. iv. 3 – 8.

Q. Was the deed witnessed by any one ? and by whom ?

A. It was seen by God.

Q. Did God hold him responsible for the deed ?

A. Yes ; he sentenced him to be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. Gen. iv. 9 – 15.

Q. Name some of the descendants of Cain ?

A. Lamech and Jabal and Jubal and Tubal-cain were among his descendants.

Q. Who first invented musical instruments ?

A. Jubal is recorded as the father of such as handle the harp and organ. Gen. iv. 21.

Q. Who first taught men the use of brass and iron ?

A. Tubal-Cain. Gen. iv. 22.

Q. To whom did the heathen commonly attribute such discoveries and inventions ?

A. To their gods ; as Pan or Vulcan.

Q. As the numbers of men increased, what was their character ?

A. It was evil. Gen. vi. 5, 12.

Q. What was the character of Noah? and how was he regarded by the Lord?

A. Noah was a just man, and walked with God; that is, he was not only just to men, but pious toward God. Gen. vi. 9.

Q. Why did God see fit to send a flood upon the earth?

A. Because of the wickedness of men. Gen. vi. 12, 13.

Q. Who were the survivors of the flood? and by what means were they preserved?

A. The family of Noah was preserved in the ark.

Q. Why was Noah spared from the general destruction?

A. Because he was righteous. Gen. vii. 1.

Q. As the flood subsided, what did Noah send forth from the ark?

A. He first sent forth a raven, and afterwards a dove. Gen. viii. 7, 8.

Q. What evidence had he that the waters were so far abated that he could leave the ark?

A. The dove returned, bringing in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off. Gen. viii. 11.

Q. What covenant did God establish with Noah and his sons?

A. That the waters shall no more become a flood, to destroy all flesh. Gen. ix. 15.

Q. What did God select as a token of the covenant?

A. The rainbow. He said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of the covenant between me and the earth." Gen. ix. 16, 17.

Q. What were the names of the sons of Noah ?

A. Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Q. What was the occupation of Noah ?

A. He was a cultivator of the earth, and he planted a vineyard. Gen. ix. 20.

Q. What disgraceful conduct is mentioned of him ?

A. He drank of the wine, and was drunken, and lay down naked in his tent. Gen. ix. 21.

Q. What is related of Ham, and his conduct towards his father ?

A. He made sport of his father's shame. Gen. ix. 22.

Q. What, of Shem and Japheth ?

A. They respectfully covered their father. Gen. ix. 23.

Q. When Noah awoke, and knew what was done, what did he declare of his sons ?

A. He pronounced a curse upon Canaan.

Q. Who was the father of Canaan ?

A. Ham, the guilty and irreverent son of Noah, was the father of Canaan, and was punished by the sentence of servitude pronounced against his descendants.

Q. Who was Nimrod, and what is said of him ?

A. He was the grandson of Ham, and is described as a mighty hunter before the Lord. Gen. x. 8, 9.

Q. Of what kingdom was he the founder ?

A. Babel, or, as afterwards called, Babylon.

Q. What is said of the languages at this time on the earth ?

A. The whole earth was of one language. Gen. xi. 1.

Q. Where did the descendants of Noah establish themselves?

A. In the land of Shinar. Gen. xi. 2.

Q. What city and tower did they build? and what was their purpose?

A. Babel; that they might not be scattered abroad. Gen. xi. 4, 9.

Q. Did the Creator intend that they should dwell in one region, or be dispersed and inhabit the whole earth?

A. He chose to scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. Gen. xi. 8, 9.

Q. In what way were they separated from one another?

A. By diversity of language. Gen. xi. 7.

Q. When it was found that they had different languages, and could not understand one another. what became of those assembled at Babel?

A. They separated into different nations. Gen. xi. 9.

Q. What are the great religious and moral truths which are inculcated and illustrated in the first chapters of Genesis?

A. The unity and supremacy of Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth; the perpetual providence and moral government of God; the essential unity of the human race; and the moral responsibility of mankind to Him who will judge the world in righteousness.

LESSON IV.

ABRAHAM.

COULD we foresee respecting any one that he was to become the founder of a nation, that through him and his descendants the truths which have most to do with human welfare were to be introduced into the world, and that his name was to be held in honor and his example was to have influence among millions and nations and races of men for thousands of years after his death, we should perceive at once the importance of his position and his character. Such is the place which Abraham holds in the history of mankind. When we consider this, we can better understand how he should have been subjected to those trials which might best reveal the nature and extent of that sentiment which should connect man with his Maker.

The vital principle of the religious life is *faith in God*. When our Saviour, in yielding up his life, said, "Not my will, but thine, O God, be done," we acknowledge not only that here was the perfect example of absolute trust and submission, but that this sentiment made him one with God. Through this self-sacrifice, he showed forth to his disciples in all coming times, in its perfect form and under its severest test, the nature of that trust and obedience which we should give to our Maker. And so also Abraham, at the beginning, was called upon to give an example of faith. His confidence in God was tried in other ways, but most strikingly in being required to surrender his only son. This point has already been adverted to in the Introduction, and need not be dwelt upon here further than is needful in order to show how the trial of Abraham was made a means of inculcating implicit trust in God. It was an example in the most impressive form, and for subsequent ages, of that which we need in all duties and trials, — of that which makes our hearts and our labors religious, and without which the religious life ceases to exist, — *faith in God*.

In a world covered with idolatry and superstition, Abraham and his posterity were chosen to preserve among men, until the "fulness of the time," the fundamental truth of religion, the unity and supremacy of God. And with this truth was given to him a promise, which was afterwards repeated again and again in different forms to his descendants, — brightening onward till it was fulfilled in Christ, — that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Thus, through the seemingly discordant events of human history ran, like a line of light, a providential purpose, binding together the beginning and the end, — a providential purpose looking forward to, and preparing the way for, the coming of one who should be the Saviour of the world.

Independent of his high vocation, there was much in the personal character of Abraham to make him worthy of perpetual remembrance. He was the head of a pastoral tribe, and was not more distinguished by faith towards God, than by a certain noble simplicity, disinterestedness, and magnanimity in his relations with men. He had, as we should expect, (for God does not in his communications destroy the moral freedom of man,) many of the characteristics, while he followed the customs, of his country and time. But in the midst of all, he showed a simplicity and greatness of soul which were peculiarly his own. In his intercourse with Lot, and in the division of the country between them, for the sake of peace; in the rescue of Lot from the confederate kings, and in the restoration to Melchizedek of all the spoils which he had recovered from his enemies; in his hospitality to strangers; in his generous interest in the cities of the plain; in his purchase of a burial-place of the sons of Heth, — these qualities constantly appear, and add to the authority of the religious teacher the simple dignity of the patriarch.

Q. From which of the sons of Noah was Abraham descended?

A. From Shem. Gen. xi. 10, 26.

Q. What is said of the religious character of Terah, the father of Abraham ?

A. He was an idolater. Josh. xxiv. 2.

Q. What was the name of his first wife ?

A. Sarai, afterwards called Sarah. Gen. xi. 29.

Q. Where did he originally dwell ?

A. In Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. xi. 31.

Q. To what land was he required to remove ?

A. To Canaan.

Q. What was the promise made by God to Abraham ?

A. "I will make of thee a great nation ; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xii. 2, 3.

Q. Why was Canaan called the land of promise ?

A. Because the Lord said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Gen. xii. 7.

Q. What was the occasion of strife between the herdsmen of Lot and those of Abraham ?

A. The land where they had fixed themselves was not sufficient for the pasturage of their flocks and herds. Gen. xiii. 5, 7.

Q. In order that there might be peace, what course did Abraham take ?

A. He proposed that they should seek separate pasture-grounds, and offered Lot his choice of the region where he would dwell, promising himself to remove elsewhere. Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

Q. How is the plain of Jordan, which Lot chose for himself, described ?

A. It was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord. Gen. xiii. 10, 11.

Q. When Lot was carried away captive by the five kings, what was done by Abraham?

A. He armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen men, pursued the enemy, rescued Lot, and recovered the spoil. Gen. xiv. 11 – 16.

Q. What took place at the meeting between him and Melchizedek, king of Salem?

A. Melchizedek met him on his return from the conflict, and brought forth bread and wine, and blessed him. Gen. xiv. 18 – 24.

Q. Who was Hagar, and what was the name of her son?

A. Hagar was Sarah's handmaid, and Sarah gave her to Abraham to be his wife. Gen. xvi. 1 – 15.

Q. What was foretold of Ishmael?

A. That he should be a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. Gen. xvi. 12.

Q. When the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was threatened, what was the petition of Abraham in their behalf?

A. That, if there were but ten righteous found there, the city should be spared for their sake. Gen. xviii. 20 – 23.

Q. What was the character of the people in these cities?

A. They had sunk into great wickedness.

Q. Who were saved when the cities of the plain were destroyed?

A. Lot and his family. Gen. xix. 12, 13, 29.

Q. By what name was the son of Abraham and Sarah called?

A. Isaac.

Q. To what severe trial of his faith was Abraham subjected?

A. He was called upon to make a sacrifice of his son. Gen. xxii. 2.

Q. What was the object of this command?

A. It was a trial of his faith, and his readiness to obey God.

Q. What lesson is here taught?

A. That we are always to obey any clear command of God.

Q. Was Abraham required to make the sacrifice of his son?

A. He was not, but was only required to show his willingness to obey. Gen. xxii. 12.

Q. What substitute was provided?

A. A ram, caught in the thicket, which Abraham offered up for a burnt-offering. Gen. xxii. 13.

Q. What promise was renewed after this trial of his faith?

A. That his seed should be multiplied, and all the nations of the earth blessed therein. Gen. xxii. 15 - 18.

LESSON V.

ISAAC AND JACOB.

THE two succeeding patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, are invested with an historical interest, not so much from peculiar excellences of character as from the fact that they constituted links in the series of persons through whom the Divine communications intrusted to Abraham were transmitted to his posterity. The promises given to Abraham were repeated to Isaac, and after him to Jacob. Through them, the great truth of the unity of God was preserved and handed down from generation to generation. It is a striking illustration of the fact that the human mind is dependent on God for truth, as the body is for the supply of its wants, that at this time, so far as we know, the knowledge of the true God was confined to the circle of the patriarchs' tents.

The narrative is characterized by simplicity and naturalness. It is one of the striking internal proofs of its truth, (one which it possesses in common with every other part of the Bible,) that, in the accounts given of different persons, no attempt is ever made to conceal or excuse their faults or vices. Every thing is set down with fearless honesty. The evil deeds of men held most in honor by the Hebrew race are narrated with as much minuteness as their virtues. Very different from the history of the founders of states in the heathen world, the patriarchs are never magnified beyond the proportions of humanity, but always appear as men, with the weaknesses as well as excellences of human nature. Another evidence of truthfulness is found in the variety of characters, and in the consistency between character and its moral results. The traits which appear in early life bear their natural fruits with advancing years, and, what is not less instructive, the virtues and vices of education, character, and custom, which belonged to the parents, reappear in their children. The practice of polygamy is the

constant source of domestic disquiet, strife, and unhappiness. The exalted religious faith of Abraham descends to his posterity, — the sentiment remaining amidst even great moral unfaithfulness. The mother of Ishmael was an Egyptian. The intriguing, partial, and untruthful character of Rebekah is communicated to the son whom she most loves. She secures to Jacob the elder brother's portion by deceiving Isaac, and, the law of retribution vindicating itself, this act makes it necessary for him to flee from his home, and Rebekah is deprived of the sight of him for many years. Through a large part of his life, Jacob is disturbed by the fear of Esau, whom he had wronged. He manifests a partiality for Joseph and Benjamin such as Rebekah had shown towards him, and this injustice of affection excites the enmity of his brethren against Joseph, and becomes the cause of Jacob's sorest afflictions.

Simply as a picture of primitive, pastoral life, the history of the patriarchs possesses a remarkable interest. Were it lost, there is nothing in ancient or modern literature which could supply its place. Thousands of years have passed, and yet so vivid is the narrative, that these early tribes — their condition, their long journeyings with their flocks and herds, their resting-places and wells in the desert, their domestic customs, their intercourse with one another, their ways of thinking, their dangers, their pleasures, and all the habits of nomadic life — are brought as freshly before us as if we could look upon them with our own eyes. As a record of the early ages, — a Daguerreotype likeness preserving their features for us to witness, — this early history would be invaluable. But still, its value in this respect is altogether incidental and subordinate. Its all-engrossing interest to us is derived from the fact of its being a record of that providential series of events through which God revealed the most essential religious truths, and prepared the way for the coming of Him who is the Light of the World.

Q. Of whom did Abraham, on the death of Sarah, purchase a burial-place?

A. Of the sons of Heth. Gen. xxiii.

Q. Can you give an account of what took place between the sons of Heth and Abraham? Gen. xxiii.

Q. Whither did Abraham send to procure a wife for his son Isaac?

A. To Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor, Abraham's brother. Gen. xxiv. 1-10.

Q. Whose daughter was Rebekah?

A. She was daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor.

Q. Where did Abraham's servant meet her, and what took place between them?

A. He met her at the well whither she had gone to draw water. She gave the stranger to drink, and then drew water for the camels. Gen. xxiv. 15.

Q. Can you describe the meeting of Isaac and Rebekah? Gen. xxiv. 61-67.

Q. At Abraham's death, where and with whom was he buried?

A. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. Gen. xxv. 8-10.

Q. What were the names of Isaac's sons?

A. Esau and Jacob.

Q. What promise was repeated to Isaac?

A. Unto thy seed I will give all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Gen. xxvi. 2-5.

Q. What wells were dug by Isaac?

A. He dug again the wells which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father ; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. Gen. xxvi. 18 – 32.

Q. To which son did Isaac give his blessing ?

A. To Jacob. Gen. xxvii.

Q. How was Esau affected by the loss of his birth-right ?

A. Esau hated Jacob, and resolved to kill him. Gen. xxvii. 41.

Q. Whither was Jacob sent, and for what reason ?

A. To Laban, his uncle, who lived at Haran ; and he was charged to take a wife of the daughters of Laban. Gen. xxvii. 42 – 46.

Q. Give an account of Jacob's dream, as he slept at night, on the way to Haran.

A. He dreamed that he saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Gen. xxviii. 10 – 12.

Q. What promise was repeated to Jacob ?

A. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

Q. On awaking, what were his words ?

A. He said, " Surely the Lord is in this place," and " This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven " Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

Q. Give an account of Jacob's first meeting with Rachel in Haran?

A. He came to a well where the shepherds were preparing to water their flocks; and presently Rachel came with her father's flock, for she kept them. And when Jacob saw Rachel, and learned that she was his cousin, he went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock. And he told her who he was; and she ran and told her father. Gen. xxix. 1-14.



LESSON VI.

TIMES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

Q. What were the names of the two wives of Jacob?

A. Leah and Rachel. Gen. xxix. 16.

Q. How many sons had Jacob?

A. Twelve. Gen. xxxv. 23-25.

Q. By what names were the sons of Rachel called?

A. Joseph and Benjamin. Gen. xxxv. 24.

Q. On leaving Laban and returning to Canaan, whom did Jacob meet?

A. His brother Esau. Gen. xxxii. 6.

Q. By what means did he endeavor to avert Esau's anger?

A. He sent forward an ample present of his flocks

and herds, and a most respectful and submissive message. Gen. xxxii.

Q. How did the two brothers meet?

A. Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, and Esau ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Gen. xxxiii.

Q. When Rachel died, where was she buried?

A. In Bethlehem. Gen. xxxv. 19.

Q. Which of Jacob's sons was most beloved by him?

A. Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children. Gen. xxxvii. 3.

Q. What was the feeling of his brethren towards him?

A. They hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Gen. xxxvii. 4.

Q. Relate the dream which Joseph had?

A. He said, "Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." Gen. xxxvii. 5 - 7, 9, 10.

Q. What effect had this on his brethren?

A. It increased their envy and jealousy. Gen. xxxvii. 8, 11.

Q. To what place did his brethren go to keep their flocks?

A. To Shechem. Gen. xxxvii. 13, 17.

Q. When Joseph was sent to visit them, how was he received?

A. When they saw him afar off, they conspired against him, to slay him. Gen. xxxvii. 18.

Q. What plan did they form for murdering him?

A. They said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh; come now, let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him." Gen. xxxvii. 19, 20.

Q. By what advice did Reuben endeavor to save him?

A. He said, "Let us not kill him, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness"; for he intended to deliver him out of their hands. Gen. xxxvii. 21, 22.

Q. What did they first do with Joseph?

A. They cast him into the pit. Gen. xxxvii. 23, 24.

Q. What was Judah's counsel, and to whom was he sold?

A. They saw a company of Ishmaelites approaching with their camels on their way to Egypt, and Judah proposed that they should sell Joseph to them. So they did as he advised, and Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites. Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28.

Q. When Reuben returned to the pit and found Joseph gone, what was his conduct?

A. He was in great distress, and said, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" Gen. xxxvii. 29, 30.

Q. How did they try to hide their guilt from their father, and what story did they tell him?

A. They took Joseph's coat of many colors, and stained it with blood, and brought it to their father, and said, This have we found. Gen. xxxvii. 31, 32.

Q. On seeing the evidence, as he supposed, of his son's death, how was he affected?

A. Jacob rent his clothes and put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. Gen. xxxvii. 34, 35.

Q. Into what country was Joseph carried?

A. The Ishmaelites carried him into Egypt. Gen. xxxvii. 36.



LESSON VII.

JOSEPH.

Q. To whom did the Ishmaelites sell Joseph?

A. To Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's guard. Gen. xxxix. 1.

Q. When thrown into prison, what treatment did he receive from the keeper of the prison?

A. The keeper showed favor to him, and committed to his care all the prisoners that were in the prison. Gen. xxxix. 21-23.

Q. How did he become known to Pharaoh?

A. By interpreting Pharaoh's dream. Gen. xli.

Q. What was Pharaoh's dream?

A. He dreamed that he stood by the river Nile, and saw seven well-favored and fat kine come up from the river, and after them seven ill-favored and lean kine ; and the ill-favored and lean kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine. Gen. xli. 1 – 8.

Q. What caused him to send for Joseph to interpret it ?

A. The chief butler told him how correctly Joseph had interpreted his dream. Gen. xli. 9 – 14.

Q. What interpretation did Joseph give to the dream ?

A. Joseph said, the dream signified that there should come seven years of great plenty, to be followed by seven years of famine. Gen. xli. 25 – 32.

Q. How did he advise Pharaoh to act ?

A. To cause a fifth part of the produce of the land during the plenteous years to be laid up in store in the cities, against the seven years of famine. Gen. xli. 33 – 37.

Q. To what place was Joseph appointed ?

A. He was appointed to see this plan carried into effect. Pharaoh said to him, “ See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.” Gen. xli. 38 – 44.

Q. Whom did he give Joseph for a wife ?

A. Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On. Gen. xli. 45.

Q. How old was Joseph at this time ?

A. Thirty years old. Gen. xli. 46.

Q. What measures were taken by him in providing against the years of famine ?

A. He laid up corn in store abundantly. Gen. xl. 46 – 49.

Q. By what names were his sons called ?

A. Manasseh and Ephraim. Gen. xli. 51, 52.

Q. Did the famine extend beyond Egypt ?

A. Yes, throughout all the neighboring countries, particularly to Canaan. Gen. xli. 57.

Q. As the famine began to be felt in Canaan, whither did Jacob send his sons to provide corn ?

A. To Egypt. Gen. xlii. 12.

Q. Which of his sons did he retain at home ?

A. Benjamin, the youngest. Gen. xlii. 3, 4.

Q. Did Joseph recognize his brethren, and did they know him ?

A. He knew them, but they did not know him.

Q. Could he have revenged himself for the wrong they had done him ?

A. It certainly was in his power, if he had chosen so to do.

Q. Did he show any revengeful feelings ?

A. He did not.

Q. Before making himself known, in order that he might see their present dispositions and character, he subjected them to several trials. How did he at first treat them ?

A. He spake roughly to them, and charged them with being spies. Gen. xlii. 7.

Q. What did he require them to do, in order to prove that they were not spies ?

A. As they had mentioned their youngest brother, who was left at home, he required that they should bring him. Gen. xlvi. 14-20.

Q. Did their fears awaken their consciences ?

A. They said one to another, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother ; therefore is this distress come upon us." Gen. xlvi. 21.

Q. What was Reuben's reply ?

A. Reuben reminded them that he had begged them not to " sin against the child " ; and added, " Behold, his blood is now required " ; that is, we are now about to suffer the penalty of our sin. Gen. xlvi. 22.

Q. How did their anxiety affect Joseph ?

A. He turned aside and wept. Gen. xlvi. 24.

Q. Who remained as a hostage, while the others returned for Benjamin ?

A. Simeon. Gen. xlvi. 24.

Q. What directions did Joseph give respecting the corn and money to be placed in their sacks ?

A. He commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every one's money into his sack. Gen. xlvi. 25.

Q. Did the discovery of the money alarm them ?

A. Yes ; they said one to another, " What is this that God hath done unto us ? " Gen. xlvi. 27, 28.

Q. On returning to Canaan, what account did they give to Jacob of their reception in Egypt ?

A. They told him exactly all that had passed. Gen. xlvi. 29 - 31.

Q. When they urged him to allow Benjamin to return with them, what was his answer?

A. "And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Gen. xlvi. 35 - 38.



LESSON VIII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

Q. Does it appear that the famine continued in Canaan?

A. Yes. It did. Gen. xlvi. 1.

Q. What did Judah say to his father?

A. Judah said, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." He also promised to be surety for the lad, that he should come safely back. Gen. xlvi. 2 - 10.

Q. Did Jacob yield to this urgency?

A. He did. He directed them to carry with them to the man a present of the best productions of the land, a little balm, a little honey, and spices. He also directed them to carry back the money

that was returned in their sacks, and as much more. Gen. xlivi. 11 – 14.

Q. What questions did Joseph ask them on their return?

A. His first question was, “Is your father well,— the old man of whom ye spake?” his second, “Is this your brother Benjamin?” Gen. xlivi. 26 – 29.

Q. How was he affected by the sight of Benjamin?

A. “He was greatly moved, and sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.” Gen. xlivi. 29 – 31.

Q. On allowing them to depart, to what new trial did he subject them?

A. He ordered the money to be returned again, as before, and moreover, his silver cup to be put in Benjamin’s sack. Gen. xliv. 1, 2.

Q. What did Joseph say to them when they were brought back?

A. “What deed is this that ye have done?” He also said, “The man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant.” Gen. xliv. 4 – 17.

Q. Can you give an account of Judah’s defence of himself and his brethren?

A. He recounted all the circumstances of the previous visit; and how they had with the greatest difficulty prevailed on their father to let their young-

est brother return with them ; and added, “ When I come to my father, and he seeth that the lad is not with us, he will die, and we shall bring down the gray hairs of our father in sorrow to the grave.” Gen. xliv. 18 – 34.

Q. What offer did he make, if Joseph would dismiss Benjamin ?

A. To remain himself in Egypt, a bondman instead of the lad. Gen. xliv. 33, 34.

Q. How was Joseph affected by Judah’s words ?

A. He could not refrain from tears. Gen. xlvi. 1.

Q. What command did he give to the Egyptians ?

A. He sent all out of his presence. Gen. xlvi. 1.

Q. When alone with them, what did he say to his brethren ?

A. He wept aloud, and made himself known to his brethren. Also, he not only forgave them, but he tried to make them forgive themselves, saying, “ Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither ; for God did send me before you, to preserve life.” Gen. xlvi. 2 – 15.

Q. What command did Pharaoh give ? and what promise in regard to Jacob and his family ?

A. He said, “ Take wagons out of the land of Egypt, for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come ” ; and “ the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Gen. xlvi. 16 – 20.

Q. How did Jacob receive his sons, and the news that Joseph was alive ?

A. At first he could not believe them ; but when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, his confidence revived, and he said, " It is enough ; Joseph my son is yet alive ; I will go and see him before I die." Gen. xlv. 25-28.

Q. What was the number which accompanied Jacob into Egypt ?

A. Including Joseph and his sons, seventy persons. Gen. xlvi. 26.

Q. Give an account of the meeting of Joseph with his father.

A. " And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him : and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Gen. xlvi. 28, 29.

Q. How were they received by Pharaoh ?

A. Pharaoh said to Joseph, " The land of Egypt is before thee ; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell." Gen xlvii. 1-10.

Q. What part of Egypt was given them, and why were they placed there ?

A. The land of Goshen, as it was a suitable region for pasturage of their flocks, and they were by occupation shepherds. Gen. xlvi. 32-34 ; xlvii. 5-10.

Q. When death approached, what promise did Jacob require of Joseph ?

A. He said, "Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: but I will lie with my fathers; and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place."

And Joseph promised to do so. Gen. xlvii. 27 - 31.

Q. Upon whom did Jacob pronounce blessings before his death?

A. Upon all his sons, and upon Joseph's two sons.

Q. What was Joseph's conduct towards his father?

A. He fell upon his father's face and wept upon him and kissed him. And he commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father. Gen. l. 1.

Q. Give an account of the funeral rites in honor of Jacob.

A. Joseph went up to the land of Canaan to bury his father, and with him went up his brethren and the members of his house. Many of the servants of Pharaoh and elders of the land of Egypt accompanied them, with chariots and horsemen. The mourning continued seven days. After that, Joseph and those that were with him returned into Egypt. Gen. l. 2 - 13.

Q. What fears did the brethren of Joseph express, after their father's death?

A. They said, "Joseph will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." Gen. l. 15.

Q. Did Joseph show a generous and forgiving spirit?

A. Joseph said, "Fear not; for am I in the place of God?" And he comforted them, and spake

kindly unto them, saying, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. 1. 19 - 21.

Q. How old was Joseph at the time of his death?

A. One hundred and ten years. Gen 1. 22.

Q. Where did he wish to be buried?

A. He took an oath of the children of Israel, that, when the time should come for their departure from Egypt, they would carry up his bones from thence. Gen. 1. 24, 25.



LESSON IX.

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT.

Q. How long did the Israelites remain in Egypt?

A. Four hundred and thirty years. Exod. xii. 40, 41.

Q. What is said of the increase of their numbers?

A. They increased abundantly, and the land was filled with them. Exod. i. 7.

Q. How were they treated at first by the Egyptians?

A. While Joseph lived, they were kindly treated Exod. i. 7.

Q. What caused the Egyptians to pursue a different course?

A. There arose up a new king, who knew not Jo-

seph ; and he became suspicious of the Israelites, that they would become too powerful, and in any future war join with the enemy. Exod. i. 8 – 10.

Q. To what hardships were the Israelites subjected ?

A. Task-masters were set over them, to afflict them with burdens. Exod. i. 11 – 14.

Q. Was any command given for the destruction of the male children of the Hebrews ?

A. "Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." Exod. i. 22.

Q. Give an account of the way in which Moses was preserved.

A. His mother made an ark of bulrushes, and covered it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. Exod. ii. 2 – 5.

Q. By whom was Moses rescued ? and how was he treated ?

A. He was found by the daughter of Pharaoh, when she went to the river to bathe. She had compassion on him, and adopted him for her own. Exod. ii. 5 – 10.

Q. What act of Moses made it necessary to flee from Egypt ?

A. He took part with one of his countrymen whom he saw oppressed by an Egyptian, and in the fray the Egyptian was killed. Exod. ii. 11 – 15.

Q. In what land did he take refuge ?

A. In the land of Midian where he dwelt with Jethro, the priest of Midian, whose daughter became his wife. Exod. ii. 15 – 22.

Q. What was the employment of Moses in Midian?

A. He kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. Exod. iii. 1.

Q. How did the Lord reveal his presence to him on Horeb?

A. The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in Horeb, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush. Exod. iii. 2 – 6.

Q. How did God regard the sufferings of the Hebrews?

A. The Lord said, “I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt. I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” Exod. iii. 7 – 10.

Q. What was he to say to the Israelites of Him who sent him?

A. “The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.” Exod. iii. 13 – 15.

Q. What message was he to deliver to the Israelites?

A. That God would bring them out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, a land flowing with milk and honey. Exod. iii. 16 – 18.

Q. Was Moses willing to go, and what objection did he make?

A. He at first was not willing, for he thought they would not believe him. Exod. iv. 1.

Q. Who would join Moses, that possessed greater eloquence than he ?

A. Aaron, his brother. Exod. iv. 14 – 16.

Q. Where did Moses and Aaron meet ?

A. At Mount Horeb. Exod. iv. 27.

Q. What was their success in communicating the commands of God to the Israelites ?

A. They “gathered together the elders of the children of Israel ; and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses ; and the people believed ; and they bowed their heads and worshipped.” Exod. iv. 29 – 31.

Q. How did they address Pharaoh, and what did they ask of him ?

A. They said, “ The God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” Exod. v. 1 – 3.

Q. What was Pharaoh’s answer ?

A. “ Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, hinder the people from their work ? get you unto your burdens.” Exod. v. 4, 5.

Q. What command did he give to the task-masters of the Hebrews ?

A. “ Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore ; let them go and gather straw for themselves.” Exod. v. 6 – 9.

Q. How did he reply to the complaints of the Israelites?

A. "Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord." Exod. v. 15 - 19.

Q. Was Moses discouraged?

A. Yes, he complained to the Lord that the only effect of his message to Pharaoh, thus far, was evil. Exod. v. 22, 23.

Q. What was the first plague inflicted on Egypt in order to induce Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart?

A. The waters were turned into blood. Exod. vii. 14 - 25.

Q. What was the second?

A. Frogs came up and covered the land. Exod. viii. 6.

Q. What was the third? The fourth? The fifth? The sixth? The seventh? The eighth? The ninth?

A. The third, the plague of lice, Exod. viii. 17; the fourth, of flies, Exod. viii. 24; the fifth, a murrain upon the cattle, Exod. ix. 3; the sixth, Boils and blains, Exod. ix. 10; the seventh, the hail, Exod. ix. 23, 25; the eighth, locusts, Exod. x. 13; the ninth, thick darkness. Exod. x. 22, 23.

Q. Was Pharaoh induced to relent and let the children of Israel go?

A. No. His heart was hardened, and he would not let the children of Israel go. Exod. x. 27.

Q. What did Moses command the Israelites to do, preparatory to the last plague, and to their leaving Egypt?

A. Each family was to kill a lamb, and to mark with the blood of the animal the lintel and side-posts of the door of the house ; " for the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, but will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Exod. xii. 21-23.

Q. Under what name was this to be afterwards observed?

A. The Passover. Exod. xii. 27.

Q. What was the last plague?

A. The slaying of the first-born. Exod. xii. 29, 30.



LESSON X.

DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.

Q. Did Pharaoh at length suffer the Hebrews to depart?

A. He did ; and the Egyptians were urgent to send them out of the land, for fear of still further calamities. Exod. xii. 30-33.

Q. Whose bones did Moses take with him?

A. Those of Joseph ; as he had enjoined upon the children of Israel to do, when the time came that they should quit Egypt. Exod. xiii. 19.

Q. What direction was taken by the Israelites ?

A. They took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. Exod xiii. 17 – 20.

Q. How were they guided ?

A. By a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Exod xiii. 21, 22.

Q. Were they pursued by the Egyptians ?

A. Yes. The Egyptians pursued them, and overtook them, encamping by the sea. Exod. xiv. 5 – 9.

Q. Into what state were the Israelites thrown by the approach of the Egyptians ?

A. They were “sore afraid,” and reproached Moses with bringing them out of Egypt only that they might die in the wilderness. Exod. xiv. 10 – 12.

Q. How did Moses encourage the Israelites ?

A. “He said, Fear not ; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” Exod. xiv. 13.

Q. Give an account of the passage of the Red Sea.

A. “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground ; and the waters were a wall

unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Exod. xiv. 19 - 25.

Q. What was the fate of the Egyptians?

A. As they pursued, the waters returned in their strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians were overthrown in the midst of the sea. Exod. xiv. 26 - 31.

Q. In what way did Moses and the people express their thankfulness?

A. They sang a triumphal song, or psalm, which has served as a model for psalms on similar subjects in later times. Exod. xv. 1.

Q. After passing the Red Sea, into what region did the Israelites enter?

A. The wilderness of Shur. Exod. xv. 22.

Q. What was the number of Israelites when they left Egypt?

A. 603,550. But the Levites were not numbered among them. Num. i. 46, 47.

Q. To what land did Moses propose to lead them?

A. To the land of Canaan, where their fathers had dwelt.

Q. How long did they wander in the wilderness?

A. Forty years.

Q. After leaving Egypt, how long was it before they reached Mount Sinai?

A. Three months.

Q. What laws were first given to the Israelites, and what are they called?

A. The Ten Commandments. Exod. xx.

Q. Can you tell some of the circumstances which attended the giving of the ten commandments?

A. The people were sanctified and collected around the foot of the mountain, while its summit was enveloped in cloud, and thunders, and lightnings, and "was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire." Exod. xix.

Q. Were the Israelites as yet restrained with difficulty from worshipping false gods?

A. Yes. They persuaded Aaron to make a golden calf, and Aaron built an altar before it, and the people offered burnt-offerings. Exod. xxxii. 1-7.

Q. As Moses descended from the mount, what was heard from the camp?

A. There was a noise of the people, shouting and singing. Exod. xxxii. 15-18.

Q. What was done by Moses, on finding the Israelites worshipping the golden calf?

A. Moses was very angry, and threw down the tables of stone on which the commandments were inscribed, and broke them to pieces. Exod. xxxii. 19, 20.

Q. Were the commandments renewed?

A. They were renewed, and in addition God gave an announcement of himself. Exod. xxxiv. 1-8.

LESSON XI.

THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS.

Q. While encamped in the wilderness, for what purpose did Moses send twelve men before him into Canaan ?

A. To spy out the land ; that is, to get information respecting the country, and its inhabitants, productions, and means of defence. Num. xiii. 17-20.

Q. What report did the spies bring back ?

A. They reported that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, and they brought back a very large bunch of grapes as a specimen of its fruits. Num. xiii. 21-27.

Q. What did they say of the people ?

A. The people, they said, were strong, and the cities walled and very great ; moreover, they added, " We saw there giants, the sons of Anak, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Num. xiii. 28-33.

Q. Wherein did Joshua and Caleb's report differ from that of the others ?

A. " Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it." Num. xiii. 30 ; xiv. 6, 7.

Q. What effect did their report have on the Israelites ?

A. The people were very much discouraged, and

murmured against Moses and Aaron, and even proposed to one another to appoint a new leader, and return to Egypt. Num. xiv. 1 - 4.

Q. What penalty was proclaimed as the one to which the Israelites should be subjected, because of their unworthiness ?

A. Moses was commanded to say to them that all of them, from twenty years old and upward, for their murmurings against the Lord, should die in the wilderness, and not come into the promised land, except only Caleb and Joshua. Num. xiv. 26 - 35.

Q. What would this history seem to imply respecting the character of the Israelites.

A. That their slavery in Egypt, and their idolatrous tendencies, made them unfit to become an independent nation among the warlike and idolatrous tribes of Canaan ?

Q. Why does it appear that they were detained in the desert ?

A. To try them and accustom them to the service of Jehovah, until a new generation should arise, better prepared to be established among the nations of Canaan. Deut. viii. 2, 3.

Q. When Moses numbered the people in the plains of Moab, who were left of those numbered forty years before in the wilderness of Sinai ?

A. There was not a man of them left of those whom Moses and Aaron numbered in the wilder-

ness of Sinai, except Caleb and Joshua. Num. xxvi. 63 – 65.

Q. Why was not Moses permitted to enter the promised land?

A. Because he rebelled against the commandments of the Lord, in the desert of Zin, where he manifested impatience, and perhaps a want of faith. Num. xxvii. 12 – 14.

Q. Whither was he sent to see it?

A. Unto the Mount Abarim, called also Nebo and Pisgah. Abarim is probably the name of the range. Num. xxvii. 12.

Q. Whom was he directed to appoint as his successor?

A. Joshua, the son of Nun. Num. xxvii. 18 – 23.

Q. After repeating in Deuteronomy the ten commandments, what great truth did he first inculcate?

A. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord.” Deut. vi. 3, 5.

Q. What were they to teach to their children?

A. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deut. vi. 5 – 9.

Q. What does he say of their dependence on God, and their duty?

A. “Thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.” Deut. viii. 5 – 10.

Q. Of what does he bid them to beware ?

A. " Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day." Deut. viii. 11 - 18.

Q. What would befall them if they were unfaithful ?

A. " If thou forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, ye shall surely perish." Deut. viii. 19, 20.

Q. In giving the Jews the land of Canaan, was it because of any desert of theirs ?

A. " Not for thy righteousness dost thou go in to possess their land ; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Deut. ix. 5.

Q. What were the blessing and the curse set before the Israelites ?

A. " A blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, — and a curse if ye will not obey, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods." Deut. xi. 26 - 29.

Q. In foreseeing the appointment of a king, what directions did he give ?

A. That they should appoint him whom the Lord should choose. Deut. xvii. 14 - 20.

Q. Of what race was he to be ?

A. One from their own nation, and not a stranger.

Deut. xvii. 15.

Q. Of what book was he to take a copy?

A. A copy of the Law of Moses, "out of that which is before the priests and Levites." Deut. xvii. 18.

Q. What use was he to make of it?

A. "He shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law and these statutes to do them." Deut. xvii. 19.

Q. Whom did Moses direct to lead the Israelites over Jordan, and what charge did he give to him?

A. Joshua. He said to him, "Be strong and of a good courage, for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them." — Deut. xxxi. 7.

Q. Whom did Moses bless before his death?

A. The children of Israel, the heads of the people and the tribes. Deut. xxxiii. 1.

Q. On leaving the plains of Moab, what mountain did he ascend?

A. The mountain of Nebo, or Pisgah. Deut. xxxiv. 1.

Q. What was there shown to him?

A. He had a general view of the territories which were to be the inheritance of his countrymen, from the plain of Jericho, which lay at his feet, to the utmost sea, which bounded the prospect to the west. Deut. xxxiv. 1 - 4.

Q. Where did Moses die?

A. In the land of Moab. Deut. xxxiv. 5.

Q. Was the place of his burial known?

A. "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Deut. xxxiv. 6.

Q. What was his age?

A. One hundred and twenty years. Deut. xxxiv. 7.

Q. Who succeeded him?

A. Joshua, the son of Nun. Deut. xxxiv. 9.

Q. What character is given of Moses?

A. "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." Deut. xxxiv. 10-12.



LESSON XII.

THE MOSAIC LAW.

THE five books of Moses derive their names from their contents. The book of Genesis is so called because it contains an account of the creation. Exodus is principally occupied with a history of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. Leviticus contains an exposition of the principal religious ceremonies and rites, and of the duties of the priestly office, among the Hebrews. Numbers derives its name from the numbering of the people, of which an account is given. Deuteronomy, or the Second Law, is so called from its containing a repetition of the chief laws of Moses.

These five books, sometimes called the Pentateuch, constitute the most important part of the Old Testament. They contain the fundamental laws of the Hebrew commonwealth, the laws which gave direction and character to the whole sub-

sequent history of the Israelites, and prepared the way for Christianity. The historical books which follow contain an account of the conduct and fortunes of the Israelites under the Law, but these books contain the Law itself. The remainder of the Old Testament holds much the same relation to the Pentateuch, as the Epistles to the Gospels. Without some knowledge of the Law and its purpose, the subsequent history of the Israelites would be full of inextricable confusion, without unity and without end. It was their union under, and reverence for, the Mosaic Law, which gave to the Israelites their distinctive national existence. It was held sacred among them as possessing a Divine authority. It was preserved with the utmost care; its existence through succeeding ages, as a standard to be appealed to, is constantly implied, both in the prosperity of the Hebrew people and in the penalties which they suffered; and it is constantly referred to by Christ and his Apostles, not only as from God, but as being a dispensation preparatory to still higher manifestations of the Divine will.

In order to understand the character and importance of the Mosaic laws, it is necessary to remember such circumstances as the following:—

1. That the Israelites were set apart to preserve in the world a knowledge of the true God, and thus to prepare the way for the coming of the Saviour.

2. That they were surrounded by idolaters, whose influence would be constantly tending to draw them away from the worship of the true God, and thus defeat the great object for which they were set apart.

3. That the Mosaic Law contains all those laws in one body which commonly are divided under different heads; for example, moral laws, the civil law, ceremonial laws, health laws.

4. That after their long servitude in Egypt, the Israelites were gross, ignorant, debased, and semi-barbarous, and that their laws, in order to raise them to a better state, had to be adapted to their actual condition.

5. That their ignorance and debasement made it necessary

to teach them through symbols, to guide them by minute regulations, and to secure their interest by the pomp of an imposing ritual.

6. That the climate required special precautions for the preservation of the public health.

If these circumstances, and others of a similar kind, are taken into account, the reasonableness and importance of the particular enactments of the Mosaic Law will generally appear, notwithstanding that the remote age when it was given, and the peculiarities of an Oriental people, with a civilization so unlike our own, may throw an occasional obscurity and difficulty over its provisions.

Of the Mosaic laws, the first given in order of time were the religious and moral laws embraced in the Ten Commandments; and that they were regarded as the most important of all, and the foundation of all, is evident from the imposing solemnity of the circumstances under which they were delivered.

Of the other laws contained in the books of Moses, the objects were as various as were the wants of the Israelites. A large part of them had for their purpose the maintenance of the knowledge and worship of Jehovah. They forbade the making of images, established a peculiar and splendid ritual, and appointed a particular place where the sacrifices of the people should be made. In order to prevent the Hebrews from joining in the idolatrous rites of the nations around them, many provisions in regard to food, clothing, and customs of living were instituted, which made it difficult for them to maintain any intimate intercourse with idolaters. The great festivals which were appointed had in view, not only the commemoration of great events in their history, and the preservation of a feeling of nationality and union, but the still higher purpose of keeping before the minds of the Israelites the great truth of the sovereignty and providence of Jehovah. Some of the laws prescribing rules of cleanliness and giving direction respecting articles of food, and others of a similar kind, were health laws. It is among these laws,—not having, like the

moral ones, a universal application, but temporary, local, and adapted to the circumstances of the Jews and to the special object for which they were set apart, — that the most difficulty is found in determining the precise reason and purpose of particular provisions. The same circumstances, however, which create the difficulty, make any knowledge beyond what we derive from the history of comparatively little importance.

Besides the strictly religious and moral laws, such as are contained in the Ten Commandments, those are of the greatest interest to us which prescribe duties of humanity, and which thus disclose the spirit in which the Creator would have his creatures regard one another. Among these, especially, are the laws which relate to war, to those held in bondage, and to the treatment of the poor. They were necessarily adapted to the actual condition of the Israelites, but were characterized by their humanity. They inculcated kindness, justice, honesty, truth, and mutual helpfulness. The regulations respecting property and the poor went far to prevent the existence of penury in its worst form, as a permanent condition of society, and, while they secured the relief, protected the character of the destitute. In this respect they stand apart from and above all heathen legislation on these subjects, and were so framed as to promote a constantly advancing civilization.

Q. What were the principal Hebrew festivals ?

A. The Sabbath, the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles.

Q. How was the Sabbath to be observed ?

A. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work ; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Deut. v. 14.

Q. On what occasion was the Passover instituted ?

A. When the destroying angel, who slew the Egyptian first-born, passed over the houses of the Hebrews, leaving their inmates unharmed. Exod. xii. 11 - 15.

Q. How was it to be observed ?

A. On the fourteenth day of the first month, towards evening, in each family they slew a perfect male lamb, of one year old, which, when roasted, the household eat in the night, without leaving any remains. All were clad and girded as if about to take a journey. Unleavened bread was eaten with it. Deut. xvi. 1 - 9.

Q. How many weeks after the Passover was the Feast of Pentecost, or of weeks ?

A. Seven weeks after the Passover. Deut. xvi. 9.

Q. How long did the Feast of Tabernacles, or of Ingathering, continue ?

A. Seven days. Deut. xvi. 13.

Q. What was the purpose of this festival ?

A. It was a feast of thanksgiving for the fruits of the year, and celebrated after the ingathering of the harvest. The particular object, however, was to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in tents during their sojourn in the wilderness.

Q. In what way were they required to live during this festival ?

A. During the festival, the people dwelt in booths made of "boughs of goodly trees, branches of

palm-trees, and willows of the brook." The booths or tents were erected in the streets open places, and suburbs; also on the flat roofs of houses. Lev. xxiii. 40-42.

Q. Why were they to spend the time in tents?

A. That succeeding generations might know that the Lord made their fathers to dwell in booths, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. Lev. xxiii. 42, 43.

Q. Give an account of the Sabbath of the seventh year.

A. It was ordained that the land should have rest every seventh year, in which the people were neither to sow their fields nor plant vineyards. It was called the Sabbatical Year. Lev. xxv. 1-7.

Q. How often did the Year of Jubilee occur?

A. After seven returns of the Sabbatical year, the next year, being the fiftieth, was the year of Jubilee. Lev. xxv. 8-13.

Q. What took place in the year of Jubilee?

A. It was announced by the blowing of trumpets, proclaiming liberty throughout the land. All male and female slaves of Hebrew origin (but not foreigners) were set at liberty. All sold or mortgaged estates returned to their former possessors; a general remission of debts to poor debtors took place. There is, however, reason to doubt whether this institution was ever faithfully carried into effect.

LESSON XIII.

LAWS OF HUMANITY AND JUSTICE.

Q. What law was given to prevent excessive punishments?

A. The punishment by stripes was appointed for certain offences, but the number of stripes that might be inflicted was limited to forty. Deut. xxv. 1-3.

Q. What reason is given for limiting the number of stripes?

A. "Lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee." Exod. xxv. 3.

Q. In their dealings, what law was given to prevent dishonesty?

A. They were not to use false weights or false measures. "For all that do such things are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." Deut. xxv. 13-16.

Q. In time of war, who were excused from joining the army?

A. Any who had built a house and had not dedicated it, or had planted a vineyard, and not yet eaten of the fruit of it, or betrothed a wife, and not yet married her, and, finally, all who were fearful and faint-hearted, were excused. Deut. xx. 5-8.

Q. In approaching any city in war, what was first to be proclaimed?

A. An offer of peace, on condition of submission. If the city chose to submit, it should be made tributary, but not be destroyed. Deut. xx. 10.

Q. In carrying on war, what law of humanity is given respecting the injury of property?

A. Fruit-trees should not be destroyed, even to employ them in the siege, "for the tree of the field (olive and fig, for instance) is man's sustenance." Deut. xx. 19, 20.

Q. What is the law respecting the removal of landmarks?

A. The landmarks were not to be removed. Before the extensive use of fences, landed property was marked out by stones or posts. It was easy to remove one of these landmarks, and thus the dishonest man might enlarge his own estate, by contracting that of his neighbor. Deut. xix. 14.

Q. In order to secure justice, how many witnesses were required?

A. One witness should not be sufficient to convict a man of any charge. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established." Deut. xix. 15.

Q. What was the punishment of a false witness?

A. If a false witness be detected, "it shall be done unto him as he thought to have done unto his brother." Deut. xix. 16-21.

LESSON XIV.

LAWS TO PROMOTE HUMANITY.

Q. What direction is given respecting lending to the poor?

A. To lend to them freely and kindly, sufficient for their need. Deut. xv. 7-11.

Q. Was the poor man allowed to redeem a possession which he had sold? and in what way?

A. He could redeem it. He might reckon the value of the possession for the remaining time until the next year of Jubilee, and on the payment of that amount to the creditor, his land should revert to him. Lev. xxv. 25-28.

Q. What command is given respecting relieving the poor?

A. If any Hebrew were become poor and fallen into decay, he was to be relieved, though a stranger or a sojourner. Lev. xxv. 35.

Q. What is said of taking usury of the poor?

A. "Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase." Lev. xxv. 37.

Q. What command is given respecting the release of Hebrew servants?

A. "If thy brother, a Hebrew man or woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free." Deut. xv. 12.

Q. When released, how was he to be sent away ?

A. "Thou shalt not let him go away empty ; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press, of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." Deut. xv. 13, 14.

Q. If the servant wished to remain, what was to be done ?

A. He could not, unless he went with his master before the judges, and had his ear bored through with an awl, as a perpetual proof that it was his choice to remain in servitude. Exod. xxi. 5, 6.

Q. What rules of kindness are given respecting the restoration of property and the aid to be given one another ?

A. If one find the ox or the ass of another gone astray, he shall bring it to the owner ; or if the owner be unknown, keep it until he be found, and then restore it. In like manner with all lost things. If a neighbor's ox or his ass fall down, it is commanded to help them. Deut. xxii. 1-4.

Q. Were there any laws for preventing cruelty to animals, and what ?

A. If one find a bird's nest with the mother bird and her young, he may take the young, but must spare the mother bird. In building a house, one must be careful to protect the roof with a battlement, to prevent accidents by falling thence. In Eastern countries the roofs of houses are usually

flat, and resorted to for recreation and pleasure. The ox was not to be muzzled, when he was used to tread out the corn. Deut. xxii. 6 - 8.

Q. What law was made to protect the poor man who had given a pledge?

A. The creditor was not to go into the poor man's house to take thence the article which was pledged for security, but must wait outside till the borrower brought it. If raiment was pledged, it could only be held during the day, and must be restored at its close. In that warm climate a man might spare his garment in the day-time, but required it at night. Such a security would only be taken of the very poorest, who had nothing better to give; as of a laborer for the use of a tool for the day, or for the supply of some pressing want, — persons who needed protection, and whom the Mosaic law in this way protected. In effect, a regulation like this would probably prevent the offering or taking such articles in pledge. Deut. xxiv. 10 - 13.

Q. What law was there respecting the payment of wages?

A. "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it." Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.

Q. From whom was it forbidden to take raiment as a pledge?

A. The widow's raiment was not to be taken as a pledge. Deut. xxiv. 17.

Q. In gathering the harvest, what was to be left for the poor?

A. When the harvest was gathered in, the grain and the olive and the grapes were not to be gathered so carefully as to leave none behind, and what was left was for gleanings for the poor, and for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Deut. xxiv. 19 - 22.



LESSON XV.

FROM MOSES TO DAVID.

THE history of the Israelites from the death of Moses to the accession of David to the throne, a period of nearly six hundred years, is contained in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, and the first chapters of 2 Samuel. Were any evidence needed of the substantial trustworthiness of the views given of the progress of events, it would be found in the books themselves. The large number of characters, so diverse, yet so distinctly drawn and so consistent with themselves and with the times in which they lived, the vivid pictures of a rude age, the gradual and imperfect hold which the Mosaic Law gained on the Hebrew people, the perpetual conflict between its requirements and their ignorance and gross tendencies, the internal disorders, the weakness, and the foreign wars which attended their slow progress onward to a settled and organized kingdom, and all this presented in a narrative so simple and inartificial, as to preclude the idea of any

art, would be sufficient assurance that we have in these books a true and life-like description of these early centuries. With the exception of the Pentateuch, they contain the earliest historical annals which we possess. They describe what existed before Greece or Rome had a name in the world. They throw light on a portion of antiquity which, without them, would be under almost total darkness. Viewed simply as the history of a period of which no other history exists, they possess a singular interest. What their value is, we may judge from the interest we should feel were the decipherers of the Egyptian hieroglyphics or the explorers of the ruins of Nineveh to discover a history as full and as natural, of the early fortunes of those buried and almost forgotten kingdoms.

That we should find difficulties to perplex us in books written so long ago, need not surprise us. On the contrary, when we consider their brevity, the remote age of which they treat, and the fact that they were written by men belonging to another race than ours, and in a language which long ago ceased to be a spoken tongue, the only wonder is that the difficulties are so few. A large part of those which exist disappear or cease to have any importance, when we call to mind some of the circumstances which ought always to be taken into account if we would understand these writings.

By whom these books were written is not certainly known, although they have been attributed to different persons celebrated in Hebrew history; nor is any peculiar inspiration claimed for their authors, as historians. Some part of them, particularly the book of Judges, seems to be a collection of national traditions preserved from generation to generation, and brought together into one continuous narrative long after most of the events which are recorded took place. Such traditions, themselves a part of the times in which they had their origin, give a truer picture of the manners and spirit of these ages than any elaborate history. But it would be impossible that books containing fragments of history so short and often so disconnected, and relating to what transpired

three thousand years ago, should not contain many things to embarrass us. We have simply to take the course which we do in regard to all other matters respecting which our knowledge is imperfect,— profit from what we know, and leave what we do not understand for further consideration as we gain additional light.

That which has occasioned the most perplexity is, perhaps, the treatment which the Canaanites received from the Israelites. Without attempting any full explanation of the difficulties which are connected with this subject, there are several considerations which should deter us from forming any hasty judgments. Canaan had always been regarded by the Hebrews as their country, allotted to them by Providence, from the time of Abraham. There were the wells which the patriarchs had dug, and the sepulchres where they were buried. In a region peopled by roving tribes scarcely more stationary than the aborigines of this country, these were recognized as among the best titles and evidences of ownership. That the Canaanites were extremely corrupt and depraved is evident from the whole history, and there seems to be nothing more inconsistent with our idea of a Providence in the fact of his making men the instruments of his judgments,— leaving them free, but overruling the results of their actions so as to accomplish some special end,— than there is in the existence of the famines and the diseases by which sometimes whole nations are swept away. The wars with the Canaanites were not attended with more circumstances of cruelty than were universal in that age, and in judging the conduct of the Israelites we probably under-estimate the degree in which they were free agents. In reading that they received a Divine command to exterminate the Canaanites, it is quite possible that we neither understand the circumstances nor the true force of the words. In our colder climate, and more literal style of speech, we constantly speak of being guided, directed, impelled, restrained by Providence. In the idioms of the Orientals, so much more picturesque and metaphorical than ours, it is quite possible

that, in what is here spoken of as the command of God, they meant very much what we mean in speaking of being guided by Providence. From the less figurative style of expression to which we are accustomed, our tendency is always to a too literal interpretation of Eastern forms of speech.

In accordance with this suggestion, it is to be remembered that the history is essentially a providential one. It is the history of a people under the peculiar and immediate government of Providence. The Hebrew was taught to look to God as the king of his nation. No idea was more prominent to his mind, and thus any national act which was supposed to be in accordance with the Divine will was naturally spoken of as done under the command of God, even in cases where there was no immediate and particular revelation.

These considerations may or may not suggest a full explanation of the difficulties which are found in these books; but they at least warrant us in assuming that the difficulties may not so much arise out of the narrative or the events, as from our ignorance of accompanying circumstances, and our want of familiarity with Oriental modes of speech.

JOSHUA.

THE book of Joshua receives its name from the great military leader who was the successor of Moses. Under the guidance of Joshua, the Israelites were established in the land of Canaan. He divided the country among the tribes of Israel, and so long as he lived his authority was submitted to, and the Israelites were faithful to their institutions. He himself was not only thoroughly imbued with their spirit, but in a peculiar degree seems always to have kept before him the instructions and example of Moses. As his life drew towards its close, he gave his parting admonitions to the people whom he had so long led, encouraging them to fidelity by promises of God's favor, and warning them against rebellion and its

certain penalties. He completed the work which the great Hebrew deliverer and lawgiver had begun, and left the children of Israel firmly established in the land of their fathers.

Q. Who became the leader of the Israelites?

A. Joshua. Josh. i. 1, 2.

Q. What notices do we find of him before this event?

A. He was the leader of the people in their first warlike encounter,— that with the Amalekites ; he accompanied Moses when he went up on Mount Sinai ; he was with Moses in the tabernacle, when he pleaded for the people ; he was one of the spies sent to observe the land, and gave his influence, with that of Caleb, in favor of advancing ; and he was finally designated by Moses to lead the people into the promised land, and, in conjunction with Eleazar the priest, to divide the land among the tribes. Exod. xvii., xxiv., xxxii., xxxiii.; Num. xiii., xiv., xxvii., xxxiv.

Q. What promises and commands did he receive?

A. He was commanded to be strong and of a good courage, and to observe to do according to the Law which Moses commanded. And the Lord said to him, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee ; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Josh. i. 5 – 9.

Q. What took place at the passage of the Jordan?

A. Joshua commanded the priests to take up the

ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And it is recorded, that, as soon as the feet of them that bare the ark were dipped in Jordan, the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap, and those that flowed toward the sea of the plain passed off, and the people crossed over on dry land. Josh. iii.

Q. What memorial did Joshua erect?

A. Joshua took twelve men, one from each tribe, and commanded them to take up every man a stone from the midst of the river, and to carry it over with them to the place where they encamped on the other side, to be a mémorial unto the children of Israel for ever. Josh. iv. 1-3, 20-24.

Q. After entering Canaan, what city was first besieged and taken?

A. Jericho. Josh. vi.

Q. In what manner were the blessings and curses of the Law proclaimed from Mount Ebal and Gerizim?

A. Joshua built unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal an altar of stones, and he wrote upon the stones a copy of the Law of Moses; and all Israel stood, half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal, and Joshua read all the words of the Law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the Law. Josh. viii. 30-35.

Q. What effect had the progress of Joshua on the kings of the Canaanitish tribes ?

A. The kings of the Canaanites gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua. *Josh. ix. 1, 2; x. 1-5.*

Q. What course was taken by the Gibeonites ?

A. They deceived Joshua, by pretending to be from a distant country, and to have come to make a league with him ; for said they, " We have heard the fame of the Lord, and all that he did in Egypt." And Joshua made a league with them. *Josh. ix. 3-15.*

Q. On discovering the deception which had been practised, what was done by the Israelites ?

A. They said, " We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel ; now therefore we may not touch them. Let them live, but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation." *Josh. ix. 16-27.*

Q. How extensive were the conquests of Joshua ?

A. By his conquests, he had obtained a footing in the land, sufficient to have enabled the Israelites to obtain a complete mastery ; but we find that in his old age there yet remained very much land to be possessed. *Josh. xi. 23; xiii.*

Q. What were the customs of the semi-barbarous people of those times in carrying on war ?

A. Extremely destructive and cruel. The conqueror was conceived to have unlimited right over the lives and property of the conquered. Captives

were often put to death, sometimes mutilated. The cruelty extended to women and children. Those whose lives were spared were made slaves.

Q. As Joshua's life drew towards its close, what exhortations did he give to the Israelites?

A. To serve the Lord in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which their fathers served in Egypt. Josh. xxiv. 14.

Q. What choice did he lay before them?

A. He said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, [that is, the Red Sea,] or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. xxiv. 15.

Q. Whom did the people choose and promise to worship?

A. They said, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Josh. xxiv. 19-25.

Q. What memorial did he establish of this event?

A. He "took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord." Josh. xxiv. 26, 27.

Q. How old was he at his death?

A. One hundred and ten years. Josh. xxiv. 29.

Q. Where were the remains of Joseph buried?

A. The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem. Josh. xxiv. 32.

LESSON XVI.

JUDGES, AND RUTH.

It is not known either by whom, or at what time, the Book of Judges was written. It seems to be a collection of traditions made, long after the events narrated took place, for the special purpose (which appears through the first sixteen chapters) of showing that the Israelites were blessed when faithful, and punished when rebellious. From the statement that there was then "no king in Israel," the author apparently lived after the establishment of the monarchy. As he neither claims for himself, nor has claimed for him, any special inspiration, it seems proper to judge of his narrative by the same rules which we should apply to any other history. The great value of the book depends, not on its presenting any new revelations of religious truth, but on its containing a history, and the only one we have, of the Hebrews during several centuries after they entered the land of Canaan. In this view, and because of the vivid picture it gives of a semi-barbarous age, and because it shows how impossible it would have been to preserve in the world the great truths which Moses had taught, except through the perpetual care of Providence, it possesses the greatest interest.

After the death of Joshua, the laws of Moses began to lose their authority, a general license of manners prevailed, and the people, intermingling and marrying with the idolatrous tribes around them, soon began to neglect the rites which their religion prescribed, and to fall into the customs of the Canaanites. There was no settled government. The people were ignorant and scarcely risen above barbarism, were broken up into fragments, and, except for brief periods, were without any acknowledged head. Sometimes there was peace, and at other times war, carried on with every circumstance of savage cruelty and ferocity. The general decay of morals and religion, and

the dissolution of social order, are strikingly described in the phrase, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This state of things continued for several centuries. During this time, as had been declared by Moses, when the Israelites sunk into depravity and idolatry their prosperity and strength failed, they were invaded and conquered by their neighbors, and endured all the misery of subjection to their enemies. When suffering brought repentance, leaders were raised up who delivered them from their foes, and restored them to a happier state. The whole history is but a long succession of rebellions, of conquests, of repents and deliverances.

The Judges were military leaders who appeared from time to time, and who, rousing the national spirit, rescued the Israelites from their oppressors. They had no accurately defined power, and retained their authority for no definite time, but seem to have been men to whom, on account of their force of character and warlike skill, the people looked as their leaders on any great emergency, and who afterwards exercised the power which such leadership gave. The whole number of whom an account is given is fifteen, ending with Samuel, the last of the Judges. The thirteen of whom mention is made in the book called by their name are chiefly celebrated as having delivered the Israelites from the Moabites, the Philistines, and other neighboring nations who had conquered and enslaved them.

Notwithstanding the incessant rebellions of the Israelites, individuals were faithful, and the religion taught by Moses had still power over the people. They were gradually reclaimed and civilized through its influence, and preserved its records and traditions to better times. It seemed to be their only bond of union, and without it their national existence must, to all human seeming, have been dissolved and lost. But while it remained in even its most imperfect form, it held them together, as since then down to our own times it has preserved the nationality of the Jews through a long series of defeats, captivities, and dispersions.

The Book of Ruth belongs to the time of the Judges. It bears, in its simplicity and naturalness, the ineffaceable marks of truth. Its picture of affection and disinterestedness in the midst of the savage disorders of the time is like an oasis in the desert,—a Goshen of light and peace in the surrounding darkness.

It stands in striking contrast with the accounts which ancient heathen times have transmitted of the progenitors of kings and great men. Among the Greeks, for example, their heroes and kings were represented as the descendants of the demi-gods. The greatest of the Hebrew kings, David, was descended from Ruth, and on this account, doubtless, her fortunes are recorded. And yet, instead of claiming for her any special distinction, she is described as a Moabitish woman, while her great virtues were those in that age but little heeded or understood,—a noble fidelity and disinterestedness. In all ancient literature, there is not to be found so beautiful a picture of simple private life, of the struggles and trials to which the humble lot was exposed, and of self-forgetting, self-devoted disinterestedness.

Q. After the death of Joshua, were the people faithful in obeying the law of God?

A. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders that outlived him.
Judg. ii. 6 – 13.

Q. What is said of the generations which followed him?

A. “They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.” Judg. ii. 10 – 13.

Q. What penalty did they suffer because of their rebellion?

A. The Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies. Judg. ii. 14, 15.

Q. Who were raised up to deliver the Israelites ?

A. Valiant leaders, who were called Judges, who from time to time delivered them out of the hand of those that oppressed them. Judg. ii. 16.

Q. What was done by the Israelites which had been forbidden ?

A. They intermarried with the heathen nations around them, and worshipped their gods. Judg. iii. 5-7.

Q. By the king of what country were they first conquered ?

A. Of Mesopotamia. Judg. iii. 8.

Q. Who was the first of the Judges ?

A. Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. Judg. iii. 9.

Q. During how long time did the Judges have authority in Israel ?

A. About three hundred years.

Q. What was the general character and condition of the Israelites during this period ?

A. There was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. In other words, for want of a firm and regular government, violence and disorder universally prevailed. Judg. xxi. 25.

Q. Can you mention the names of some of the Judges ?

A. Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Barak and Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel. Judg. iii. 9, 15, 31; iv. 4; vi. 36; xi. 1.

Q. What apologue or fable is narrated by Jotham to the people of Shechem ?

A. Abimelech, the son of Gideon, had induced the people of Shechem to make him king, and to secure his power had put to death all his brothers, except Jotham, the youngest, who escaped. Jotham addressed the fable of the trees choosing a king to the men of Shechem, to teach them that often the most worthless individual is foremost to thrust himself into power. Judg. ix. 7 - 21.

Q. Of what people was Ruth ?

A. Ruth was a woman of Moab, and married to one of the sons of Naomi, a Hebrew woman, who with her husband had gone to sojourn in the country of Moab. Ruth i.

Q. On the death of her sons, what did she say to her daughters-in-law ?

A. " And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house ; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me." Ruth i. 8.

Q. Which of them left her ?

A. Orpah. Ruth i. 14.

Q. What did she say to Ruth, when she found that she remained ?

A. " Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people ; return thou after thy sister-in-law." Ruth i. 15.

Q. What was the reply of Ruth ?

A. "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her." Ruth i. 16 – 18.

Q. Whither did they go ? and where did they dwell ?

A. They returned out of the country of the Moabites, and came to Bethlehem, in the beginning of barley-harvest. Ruth i. 19 – 22.

Q. How did Ruth find bread for herself and her mother-in-law ?

A. Naomi had a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth, whose name was Boaz, and Ruth went to the field to glean after the reapers ; and it so happened that she gleaned on a part of the field which belonged to Boaz. Ruth ii. 1 – 3.

Q. What directions were given by Boaz in regard to her gleaning in the fields ?

A. He said to her, " Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens." Ruth ii. 4 – 9.

Q. How was she treated by Boaz ?

A. He directed her to come and sit beside the reapers at meal-time, and to partake of their food ;

and he commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not; and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them.” Ruth ii. 10–17.

Q. Was he a kinsman of Naomi?

A. He was a kinsman of her husband’s. Ruth ii. 1.

Q. To whom was Ruth married?

A. To Boaz. Ruth iv. 10.

Q. Of her descendants, who was celebrated as the greatest of the Israelitish kings?

A. David. He was the great-grandson of Ruth. Ruth iv. 22.



LESSON XVII.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

THE two books of Samuel receive their name from the last of the Judges. The traditions which are recorded in them extend from the time of Eli to the last year of the reign of David. During this period occurred one of the most important events in Hebrew history,—the establishment of the monarchy.

Israel had flourished under the rule of Samuel, and had been successful in its wars with the surrounding nations. But in his old age, his sons whom he had appointed to fill his place abused their power, and drew on themselves the enmity of the people by their injustice. This was the immediate occasion of the revolution in the government. The people, as a remedy for the evils to which they were subjected, demanded a king. Their wishes were at first resisted by Samuel, but he at length yielded to their urgency, and, under the guidance of a

Divine impulse, anointed Saul as their king. After the new order of things was established, Samuel addressed the people in a discourse admirable alike for its exhortations and its pathetic dignity. He appeals to the Hebrews as witnesses to the rectitude of his course ; he recalls to their minds the history of their fathers, to show how the government of God had always been over them, and how their welfare had depended on their fidelity ; and, finally, he exhorts them to fear the Lord, and to serve him in truth with all the heart. No words could have been more suited to the occasion on which the aged and honored ruler surrendered his power to his successor.

The reign of Saul was disturbed by repeated wars with neighboring nations, especially the Philistines, a people which had been steadily gaining power on the southern border of Israel. During his reign Saul was subject to occasional fits of insanity ; he became distrustful and jealous of David, whom he endeavored to destroy ; he became unfaithful to the Divine law, and at length, after a disastrous defeat in a battle with the Philistines, fell by his own hand.

One of the most beautiful characters in Hebrew history is that of Jonathan, the son of Saul. "Placed in the most difficult circumstances, between his father and his friend, he knew how to respect the one and to serve the other, and to fail in none of his duties to either." His character has all the charm of romance, while its simplicity and consistency furnish sufficient evidence that it was drawn from the life. The intimacy between Jonathan and David, who were at the same time rivals for the throne and united to each other in closest friendship, shows the nobleness and magnanimity which belonged to both ; while in the whole range of literature there is not to be found a more heartfelt utterance of affectionate memory and tender grief, than the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan.

Q. What vision appeared to Samuel as he slept ?

A. When he lay down to sleep where the ark of

God was, the Lord called, "Samuel," and he said,
"Here am I." 1 Sam. iii. 1-3.

Q. What was he commanded to say to Eli?

A. The Lord said, "I will judge the house of Eli for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." 1 Sam. iii. 11-14.

Q. Was Samuel faithful to what he had heard?

A. At first he was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but on being urged, he told him the whole. 1 Sam. iii. 15-18.

Q. How did Eli receive the message?

A. He said, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Q. Whom did Samuel in his old age make judges in his place?

A. He made his sons judges over Israel. 1 Sam. viii. 1.

Q. What was the character of his sons?

A. They walked not in his ways, but "took bribes, and perverted judgment." 1 Sam. viii. 2, 3.

Q. What did the people of Israel demand of Samuel, and why?

A. That he should appoint a king to judge them, like all the nations. 1 Sam. viii. 4, 5.

Q. What did Samuel warn them would befall them?

A. He warned them that their king would take their property, and use it at his pleasure, and take their sons and their daughters, and make them his servants. 1 Sam. viii. 11-18.

Q. Who was the first king of Israel?

A. Saul. 1 Sam. xi. 14, 15.

Q. After Saul was made king, what appeal did Samuel make to the people respecting his own integrity?

A. "Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." — 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4.

Q. What warnings did he give?

A. He told them, that if they would fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, it should be well with them, and with their king; but if they would not obey the voice of the Lord, the hand of the Lord should be against them, as it had been against their fathers. 1 Sam. xii. 13 — 15.

Q. In what condition were the Israelites when the Philistines made war upon them?

A. The Philistines were very powerful, and the Israelites were so alarmed, that they hid themselves in caves and in thickets. 1 Sam. xiii: 5 — 7, 19 — 23.

Q. In one of the subsequent wars with the Philistines, what gigantic champion defied the army of Israel?

A. Goliath of Gath. 1 Sam. xvii. 4.

Q. By whom was he slain, and how?

A. David slew him with a sling and with a stone.
1 Sam. xvii. 48 - 51.

Q. What is said of the friendship of David and Jonathan?

A. The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and they made a covenant together. 1 Sam. xviii. 1 - 4.

Q. What first excited the jealousy of Saul against David?

A. The favor shown by the people to David, when he returned from the slaughter of Goliath. 1 Sam. xviii. 5 - 9.

Q. What instances are given of the friendship of Jonathan for David?

A. When Saul sought to kill David, Jonathan gave David warning, that he should conceal himself; and he pleaded with Saul, so that he for a time forgot his displeasure, and received David again into his presence. 1 Sam. xix. 1 - 7; xx.

Q. Describe the parting of David and Jonathan.

A. "They kissed one another, and wept one with another. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever." 1 Sam. xx. 41, 42.

Q. What took place in the wilderness of En-gedi?

A. Saul, pursuing David, came to the cavern of En-gedi, in which David was concealed, and lay down to sleep. "Then David arose, and cut off the skirts of Saul's robe privily." David's men advised him to kill Saul, who was entirely in his power; but he would not, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." 1 Sam. xxiv.

Q. When was Saul's life again in the power of David?

A. Saul had encamped in the wilderness of Ziph. And David and Abishai penetrated by night into the midst of the encampment, to the place where Saul lay sleeping; and Abishai asked leave to run him through with a spear, but David would not consent, but carried away the king's spear, which stood by his bolster, and the cruise of water, and kept them as an evidence how entirely he had had the life of Saul in his power. 1 Sam. xxvi. 1 - 12.

Q. Was Saul again reconciled to David?

A. On finding how David had spared his life, he repented of his jealousy and suspicion, and said, "Return my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day." 1 Sam. xxvi. 21 - 25.

Q. What was the result of the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines on Mount Gilboa?

A. The men of Israel fled from before the Philis-

tines, and were slain on Mount Gilboa. 1 Sam. xxxi. 1, 2.

Q. Who are mentioned among the slain?

A. Jonathan and two more of the sons of Saul. 1 Sam. xxxi. 2.

Q. What was the fate of Saul?

A. Saul was wounded, and said to his armor-bearer, “Draw thy sword and thrust me through, lest the enemy thrust me through and abuse me.” But the armor-bearer would not, for he was afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. 1 Sam. xxxi. 3 – 6.

Q. In the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan, how does he speak of them?

A. Forgetting all the causes he had for resentment against Saul, and remembering only his early kindness, and that he was the father of Jonathan, his friend, he uttered a pathetic lamentation for them both, exclaiming, “The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!” 2 Sam. i. 17 – 27.



LESSON XVIII.

DAVID.

THE reign of David was not only the most memorable in the Hebrew annals, but he was himself one of the most remarkable men of whom ancient history has preserved the

memory. Born in a shepherd's tent, he rose to be the king of all the tribes of Israel. While Saul was alive, he was pursued by his suspicious and jealous enmity, and obliged at times to take refuge among the hills and deserts, or to flee for safety to neighboring and hostile tribes; but throughout all, while he protected his own life, he maintained his loyalty to the king. At this time, notwithstanding his desperate fortunes, devoted followers collected around him, some of whom were eminent during his whole reign. On the death of Saul, at which time he became king of Judah, he found the Israelites dispirited by defeat, divided among themselves, and apparently ready to be the prey of any of the surrounding nations which might choose to invade them. He drew the tribes together into a closely compacted state, and, at his death, left it one of the most powerful monarchies of the East, — its territories extending to the Euphrates on the east, and to Arabia on the south. Having made Jerusalem his capital, he brought thither the ark of the covenant, and established there, under imposing and impressive ceremonies, the centre of the national worship. Under his wise administration, idolatry disappeared from among the Israelites. During most of his reign domestic peace prevailed, and what had been but a feeble state became a prosperous and powerful monarchy. He was forbidden to build, as he wished, a temple to Jehovah, and the reason given is one worthy of remembrance, — because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood upon the earth. He, however, amassed immense treasures, in order that his successor might have the means with which to accomplish this great work which he had so much at heart. But he was not merely a warrior, a conqueror, and a wise ruler. In youth he had attracted the attention of Saul as a minstrel. After the lapse of so many centuries, we look back and acknowledge that he has been, without equal, the great religious poet of the world.

His career was one of almost unvarying success, until, through power and temptation, he was led into guilt. After

the death of Uriah, though still prosperous in his relations with foreign states, he was troubled with dissensions among his children, and with rebellion and civil war. His repentance was as marked as his guilt; but, as if to make it a lesson for all times, the years which followed his great crime were darkened by events which above all others were by him most keenly felt. His last days were troubled by the conspiracy of his eldest son, Adonijah, and he was obliged from his death-bed to give directions for the consecration of Solomon as his successor.

In judging of the character of David, his age and position must be remembered. He was not only a warrior and a king, but an Eastern despot, and thus subject to the temptations incident to unlimited power. The wonder is that his power was so rarely abused. He grew up among a semi-barbarous people, with whom human life was held of small account; and yet few conquerors of the most civilized times have been more free from cruelty and needless bloodshed; while the Israelites, under Providence, owed to him their vast and rapid advance in civilization during his reign. The customs and laws of war among the Greeks of the time of Pericles allowed of greater cruelty than was ever practised by this Oriental king. He lived before the light of Christianity visited the world, he was surrounded by rude tribes and violent men, who recognized no rights except those of the strong hand; and yet in his long life, crowded with events, how comparatively few things inconsistent with his professed devotion to Jehovah. If he had the defects of his time, he had those virtues also which are the best and greatest in all times. His soul was of the heroic stamp. Where in all history is any thing more admirable than his generous magnanimity towards Saul, and the tenderness of the friendship between him and Jonathan? He had those qualities which attach man with an unfaltering devotion. If he was guilty of evil deeds, he was capable of a repentance such as few ever exhibit. His great and generous nature, both in its influence on others and in the course which it prompted him to take, is seen, when, pining for the water of

his sweet native spring in Bethlehem, three of his chief men broke through the ranks of the enemy to bring it to him. But when it was brought, he could not lift the cup to his lips. He understood their devotion,—the water was sacred,—and “he poured it out, an offering to the Lord.” The depth and reality of his religious feelings are seen in the fact, that, when our souls are most moved by devotion, by penitence, by remorse, or by the sublimest hopes, we find no better words in which to express these emotions than those of the Hebrew Psalmist. When we recall the career of David as shepherd, minstrel, soldier, king, conqueror, the founder of a great monarchy, the organizer of a people under their national laws and religion, when we see him rescuing them from idolatry, and putting them in the way of civilization, and remember that he stood alone, unable to look to a single human being around him for light or guidance or for more generous motives, we cannot wonder that the Hebrew race has always reverenced him as their greatest king, nor that the world has held him in honor.

Q. Over what part of the Israelites did David at first reign?

A. The tribe of Judah. 2 Sam. ii. 4.

Q. Who was made king over the remaining tribes?

A. Ishbosheth, the son of Saul. 2 Sam. ii. 8–10.

Q. By whom was Ishbosheth murdered?

A. By two of his captains, who murdered him as he slept at noon, in the heat of the day, thinking, doubtless, to gain the favor of David by the act. 2 Sam. iv. 2, 5–7.

Q. How did David receive them when they brought to him the head of Ishbosheth?

A. He said, “When one told me, saying, Behold

Saul is dead, I took hold of him and slew him ; how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person, in his own home, upon his bed." So he ordered them to be put to death. 2 Sam. iv. 9 - 12.

Q. After the death of Ishbosheth, what message and what offer did the Israelites send to David ?

A. All the tribes of Israel sent to David at Hebron, and made a league with him, and they appointed David king over Israel. 2 Sam. v. 1 - 3.

Q. How long was David king over Judah alone, and how long over Judah and Israel ?

A. "He reigned in Hebron, over Judah, seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem, over all Israel and Judah, thirty-three years." 2 Sam. v. 5.

Q. What was the first city taken by David, after he was anointed king ?

A. Jerusalem. 2 Sam. v. 6, 7 ; 1 Chron. xi. 4 - 9.

Q. What was the name of David's capital city ?

A. It was called anciently Salem ; in David's time, Jerusalem ; and is frequently alluded to as the city of David.

Q. From what neighboring king did David receive ambassadors ?

A. Hiram, king of Tyre. 2 Sam. v. 11.

Q. To what place did David finally bring the ark ?

A. He brought it from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David, and set it in the midst of a tent prepared for its reception. 2 Sam. vi. 12. 1 Chron. xvi. 1.

Q. What did David say of building a temple at Jerusalem to Jehovah?

A. He said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains,"—that is, in a tent. 2 Sam. vii. 2.

Q. Why was he forbidden to build the temple?

A. The word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight." 1 Chron. xxii. 7, 8.

Q. Did he make any preparation for this work?

A. Yes; he collected stones and iron and brass and cedar-trees in abundance, besides much treasure. 1 Chron. xxii. 1–6.

Q. What were the names of some of David's principal warriors?

A. Joab, Eleazar, Abishai, Jehoiada, and others. 1 Chron. xi. 10–25.

Q. What is told of three who visited him in the cave of Adullam?

A. When David was in the cave of Adullam, and the garrison of the Philistines was in Bethlehem, David longed, and said, "O that one would give me drink of the well of Bethlehem!" And three of his mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, and brought it to David. But he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the

Lord, for he said, "With the jeopardy of their lives they brought it"; therefore he would not drink it. 2 Sam. xxiii. 13-17; 1 Chron. xi. 15-19.

Q. How far did David's conquests extend towards the East?

A. To the river Euphrates. 2 Sam. viii. 3-6.

Q. Who was the captain of his host?

A. Joab. 2 Sam. viii. 16.

Q. In what way did David show his affectionate remembrance of Jonathan?

A. Finding that Mephibosheth, one of Jonathan's sons, had escaped the general ruin, probably in consequence of his lameness, which had kept him in security, he sent for him, and said to him, "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan, thy father's sake, and will restore to thee all the land of Saul; and thou shalt eat at my table continually." 2 Sam. ix. 5-7, 13.

Q. What was the parable which Nathan spake to David after the death of Uriah, and what was the occasion of it?

A. It was the parable of the poor man and his ewe lamb, and was spoken after David had taken away the wife of Uriah, and had caused Uriah to be exposed in battle, so that he was slain by the enemy. 2 Sam. xii. 1-7.

Q. Which of David's sons rebelled against him?

A. Absalom. 2 Sam. xv. 10-12.

Q. When obliged to flee with those who remained faithful to him from Jerusalem, what generous command did he give to Ittai, the Gittite?

A. "Return and abide with the king [Absalom], for thou art a stranger and an exile." 2 Sam. xv. 19, 20.

Q. What was the reply of Ittai?

A. "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, even in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." 2 Sam. xv: 21, 22.

Q. What directions did he give respecting the ark?

A. Zadok the priest, with the Levites, went out with David bearing the ark; but David directed them to carry it back to the city. 2 Sam. xv. 24-26.

Q. Does David seem to have been beloved by his immediate followers?

A. Yes; the conduct of Ittai, the Gittite, of Hushai the Archite, and of many others, is proof of it.

Q. As they left the city by Mount Olivet, what is said of them?

A. David went up the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and the people that were with him wept also. 2 Sam. xv. 30.

Q. When Shimei cursed him in his adversity, did he refuse to let him be injured?

A. Shimei, a man of the family of Saul, saw him as he went up, and cursed him, and threw stones at David and his men. And Abishai said to Da-

vid, "Let me go over and take off his head"; but David said, "Behold, my son seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite! let him alone and let him curse." 2 Sam. xvi. 5 - 14.

Q. What was the fate of Absalom?

A. He was caught in the branches of a tree as he rode under it, and was slain by Joab. 2 Sam. xviii. 9 - 17.

Q. When David heard of the death of Absalom, what were his words?

A. "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

Q. What was the age of Barzillai?

A. Barzillai was eighty years old; and when David was in adversity and fleeing from Absalom, and in distress for want of provisions, Barzillai came forward and supplied him, and those who were with him. 2 Sam. xix. 32.

Q. When David would have brought him to live with him in Jerusalem, what was his reply?

A. He replied, "I am fourscore years old; can I taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear the voice of singing men and singing women?" So he declined to go to live at the king's court. 2 Sam. xix. 35 - 37.

Q. Whom did David appoint to reign in his stead after his death?

A. Solomon.

Q. As death approached, what charge did David give to Solomon?

A. "I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself." 1 Kings ii. 1 - 3.



LESSON XIX.

SOLOMON.

As the life of David drew towards its close, Adonijah, one of his sons, attempted to seize the sceptre. His attempt was, however, frustrated, and on the death of David, Solomon succeeded him. His reign was long, and signally peaceful and prosperous. He executed the design, which his father had conceived, of building a magnificent temple at Jerusalem. He entered into a close alliance with the king of Tyre, and in conjunction with him carried on an extensive commerce from a port on the Red Sea with Ophir, which has been supposed to be India; while their fleets on the Mediterranean traded towards the west as far as Tarshish, or Spain. Peace and a wise administration secured to his subjects general prosperity; and agriculture, commerce, and the arts, all flourished. His kingdom was at this time the most opulent and powerful monarchy of Western Asia, the territory under his sway extending from Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates. Wealth flowed in from all quarters, for-

sign artists were introduced, and strangers and foreign princes even were attracted to Jerusalem by the fame of his wisdom and greatness.

In the beginning of his reign, he had sought of God for wisdom as the sole gift, that he might rule his people wisely and justly. For many years he lived in the spirit of this prayer, and was faithful to the laws of Moses. But falling into the customs of the East, he took to himself a great number of wives, many of whom were idolaters. By these, in his old age, he was himself led into idolatrous practices. As the punishment of his guilt, it was proclaimed to him, that at his death his kingdom should be rent apart, and that, though his descendants should reign over Judah and Benjamin, the remaining tribes should be torn from his son. He lived long enough to be disturbed by the plottings of Jeroboam, and to see the omens of approaching disaster.

Three books of the Old Testament have been commonly attributed to him, — Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The Book of Proverbs contains lessons of morality and religion, of faith and prudence, expressed in striking and often poetical forms, in which the great principles of duty and practical wisdom are applied to the common concerns of daily life.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has been supposed to have been written in the old age of Solomon. It expresses on one side the gloomy and despairing views of one who has lived solely for the pleasures and gains of the earth, and who has found them all vanity, and on the other, the necessity of preparing for the certain judgment of God.

The Song of Songs has been supposed to be a collection of poems, or fragments of poems, composed on the occasion of the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of the king of Egypt. The new-married pair and choirs of their servants respond to each other. It is to be read as an Oriental poem ; and viewed as such, it is full of beauty, and all the more interesting because the mode of treating such subjects among the

people of the East was so unlike that to which we are accustomed.

Q. Who succeeded David as king of Israel?

A. Solomon. 1 Chron. xxix. 23, 24.

Q. Whose daughter did he receive for a wife?

A. The daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. 1 Kings iii. 1.

Q. Can you give an account of his dream at Gibeon?

A. The Lord appeared to him in a dream by night, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." 1 Kings iii. 5 - 15.

Q. For what did he ask?

A. He asked for wisdom. He said, "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." 1 Kings iii. 7 - 9.

Q. What was the promise?

A. The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing, and he promised to give him what he asked, a wise and an understanding heart, and also riches and honor, "so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." 1 Kings iii. 11 - 14.

Q. What is said of his wisdom?

A. His wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt; and his fame was in all nations round about. 1 Kings iv. 29 - 34.

Q. From what friendly king did Solomon request aid in building the temple?

A. From Hiram, king of Tyre, who had been the friend of David. 1 Kings v. 1-6.

Q. What aid did he receive?

A. Hiram furnished him with skilful workmen, and with fir-trees and cedars of Lebanon, which he caused to be sent by sea in floats unto the place appointed by Solomon. 1 Kings v. 7-10.

Q. How many men were employed in preparing materials and in building the temple?

A. 180,000 men, besides 3,300 officers and superintendents. 1 Kings v. 13-16.

Q. What architect did he obtain from Tyre?

A. Hiram of Tyre. His mother was a Hebrew woman, and his father a man of Tyre. 1 Kings vii. 13, 14; 2 Chron. ii. 13, 14.

Q. When the temple was completed; what was first brought into it, and where was it placed?

A. The ark of the covenant, which was deposited in the most holy place under the wings of the cherubim. 1 Kings viii. 1-6.

Q. What was in the ark?

A. Nothing but "the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb." 1 Kings viii. 9.

Q. Was there any manifestation of the Divine presence on this occasion, and what?

A. A cloud filled the house, so that the priests could not stand to minister. 1 Kings viii. 11.

Q. Who were assembled at the dedication of the temple?

A. The elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, and the chief of the fathers of the people. 1 Kings viii. 1, 2.

Q. Can you mention any of the petitions which are found in Solomon's prayer?

A. He prayed that God would hear the prayers of his people offered in that place, and relieve them in seasons of distress, whether caused by their enemies, or by drought, or by pestilence or famine, or by whatever other cause. 1 Kings viii. 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 41, 44, 46.

Q. What blessing did he seek?

A. That the Lord should be with them, and incline their hearts to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments. 1 Kings viii. 57, 58.

Q. What is said of the great festival held at the dedication of the temple?

A. It was celebrated with great rejoicings, for fourteen days. The people from the most distant parts of the country came to Jerusalem to take part in it, and at the close of it the people blessed the king, and returned to their homes joyful for all the goodness that the Lord had done for them. 1 Kings viii. 65, 66.

Q. What promises and warnings were renewed to Solomon?

A. His throne should be established so long as he

should continue faithful to the worship of the true God ; but if he or his descendants should go and serve other gods, then should Israel be cut off the land which the Lord had given them. 1 Kings ix. 4-9.

Q. What induced the queen of Sheba to visit him ?

A. The fame of his wisdom. 1 Kings x. 1.

Q. At what place on the Red Sea did Solomon build a fleet of ships ?

A. At Ezion-geber, on the Red Sea. 1 Kings ix. 26.

Q. Whence did he obtain sailors ?

A. From Hiram, king of Tyre. 1 Kings ix. 27.

Q. To what country did they trade ?

A. To Ophir, whence they brought large quantities of gold. 1 Kings ix. 28.

Q. Where in the Mediterranean did Solomon and Hiram carry on commerce ?

A. To Tarshish, which is supposed to have been in the southern or western part of Spain. 1 Kings x. 22 ; 2 Chron. ix. 21.

Q. What was the character of Solomon during the early part of his reign ?

A. He walked in the statutes of David his father ; yet he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. 1 Kings iii. 3, 4.

Q. Did he continue faithful to Jehovah throughout his reign ?

A. No ; when he was old, he did evil in the sight

of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David, his father. He built high places for various idol deities. 1 Kings xi. 4-8.

Q. By whom was he led astray?

A. By his foreign and idolatrous wives, who turned away his heart after other gods. 1 Kings xi. 4.

Q. What warning did he receive respecting the punishment of his transgressions?

A. "Forasmuch as this is done by thee, I will surely rend away the kingdom from thee, and give it to thy servant." 1 Kings xi. 11-13.

Q. What enemies disturbed the last years of his reign?

A. Hadad, the Edomite, and Rezon, king of Damascus, and Jeroboam, one of his own generals. 1 Kings xi. 14, 23, 26.

Q. What was the extent of his kingdom?

A. He reigned over all the kings from the river (Euphrates) to the border of Egypt. 2 Chron. ix. 26.

Q. What books of the Old Testament have been commonly supposed to have been written by Solomon?

A. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles.

LESSON XX.

REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

On the death of Solomon, the people assembled at Shechem, for the purpose of making his son Rehoboam king. The reign of Solomon, though a prosperous, had been in certain respects an oppressive one; and the people demanded of his successor some relief from their burdens as the condition of placing him on the throne. This was refused in contemptuous and threatening terms, and it so excited their indignation that ten tribes renounced their allegiance to him, and elected Jeroboam for their sovereign. Two tribes only, Judah and Benjamin, — often spoken of as one, because of the much greater extent of Judah, and because the capital was situated on the borders of both, — remained faithful to him.

This revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam led to the permanent division of the great Hebrew monarchy into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. This event greatly weakened the power of the Hebrew people, and both nations were plunged into great disasters because of their subsequent unfaithfulness. From the time of Moses, the assurance had been given to the chosen race, that their prosperity would depend on the fidelity of their allegiance to Jehovah. During the latter years of Solomon, idolatry had begun to creep in; but after his death it made far more rapid progress. Before the death of Rehoboam, the idolatrous customs of the heathen had come to be very generally practised, even in Judah. But in the kingdom of Israel the decay of the true religion was much more rapid. The temple was the centre of Hebrew worship, and the faithful were required, three times a year, on the recurrence of the great festivals, to visit Jerusalem. Jeroboam feared that, if his subjects went up to Jerusalem to sacrifice, and still regarded that city and its temple as the great place of religious resort, his power would be unstable and un-

certain. For this reason he abolished the Mosaic worship, and in its place — imitating the Israelites in the desert — made two calves of gold, which he set up, one in Bethel, the other in Dan. He built temples for them, and called on his people to worship them, as the gods which had brought their fathers out of Egypt. In the mean while, the Levites had fled into Judah, and Jeroboam appointed for priests all who were willing to accept the office. In this way idolatry was permanently established, and the best disposed of the successors of Jeroboam could not, or did not, attempt to abolish it. The corruption of the people constantly increased, and finally, 253 years after the revolt, the kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the people dispersed in slavery through the provinces of their Assyrian conquerors.

In the kingdom of Judah the knowledge and worship of the true God were better preserved. Though there were many corrupt and idolatrous kings, there were others who were faithful to the Mosaic institutions ; and, according to the promise made to David, his descendants occupied the throne until the destruction of the kingdom. This took place 387 years after the death of Solomon, when Judea was ravaged by the Babylonians, Jerusalem and the temple destroyed, and the king and the people carried into captivity.

Q. What was the name of the son of Solomon who succeeded him ?

A. Rehoboam. 1 Kings xi. 43.

Q. When the people of Israel assembled at Shechem to make him king, what did they demand of him ?

A. Jeroboam and the leaders of the people of Israel asked of him some relief from the grievous service and heavy yoke under which they had lain during the reign of Solomon. The expressions

are supposed to mean excessive taxation, and forced labor on the temple and palaces, which Solomon built. 1 Kings xii. 3, 4.

Q. What reply did the old men counsel him to make ?

A. They recommended him to speak good words to the people, and serve them faithfully. 1 Kings xii. 6, 7.

Q. Did he follow their counsel ?

A. No ; he forsook their counsel, and took that of the young men who had grown up with him. 1 Kings xii. 8.

Q. What did the young men advise ?

A. To give the people a rude answer, and set them at defiance. 1 Kings xii. 8 – 11.

Q. What answer did he finally make to the people ?

A. "Whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke ; my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." 1 Kings xii. 12 – 15.

Q. How was his answer received ?

A. When all Israel saw that the king hearkened not to them, the people said, "What portion have we in David ? to your tents, O Israel !" So Israel rebelled against the house of David, and were never reunited to it. 1 Kings xii. 16 – 19.

Q. Whom did they make king in his place ?

A. Jeroboam. 1 Kings xii. 20.

Q. What tribes remained faithful to Rehoboam ?

A. Judah and Benjamin, often spoken of as Judah alone. 1 Kings xii. 20.

Q. Who from among the other tribes came to Judah, and for what reason?

A. The priests and the Levites that were in Israel resorted to him; for Jeroboam had cast them off from executing the priest's office. Those, also, out of all the tribes, who set their heart to seek the Lord, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice. 2 Chron. xi. 13 - 16.

Q. What was the condition and character of Rehoboam during the first years of his reign?

A. This resort of individuals from the other tribes to Jerusalem made the kingdom of Rehoboam strong, and for three years he continued to walk in the way of David and Solomon. 2 Chron. xi. 17.

Q. Did Rehoboam continue faithful?

A. No; when he found his kingdom established and strong, he forsook the law of the Lord. 1 Kings xiv. 21 - 24; 2 Chron. xii. 1.

Q. What sufferings befell Judah because of this guilt?

A. Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took the fenced cities of Judah, and came to Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the temple which Solomon had laid up. 2 Chron. xii. 2 - 4; 1 Kings xiv. 25 - 28.

Q. What was the character of Jeroboam?

A. He is usually designated as “he who made Israel to sin.” 1 Kings xv. 34.

Q. What change did he make in the religion of Israel, and why did he fear to have the people go to the temple at Jerusalem to worship?

A. Fearing that the practice of resorting to Jerusalem to worship in the temple would turn the hearts of the people back to their old attachment to the house of David, he set up two calves of gold as objects of worship; one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, and directed the people to worship them as the gods which brought them up out of the land of Egypt. 1 Kings xii. 25 – 33.

Q. What other means did he take to prevent the people from going to Jerusalem to worship?

A. He ordained a feast, like the Feast of Tabernacles, only to be kept one month later, and at Bethel in his own kingdom, instead of in Jerusalem. 1 Kings xii. 28 – 33.

Q. Who did he appoint priests of the idols?

A. He made priests of the lowest of the people, instead of confining the priest's office to the family of Levi, as Moses had directed. 1 Kings xiii. 33, 34.

LESSON XXI.

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

Q. How many kings reigned over Judah from the time of the separation to the Babylonish captivity?

A. Twenty.

Q. Can you mention some of the good kings?

A. Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah.

Q. What course did Hezekiah take in regard to the idolatrous customs of his people?

A. He destroyed the images and other objects of idolatry, and restored the temple worship, with great splendor. 2 Kings xviii. 4-7.

Q. What was the character of Manasseh?

A. He built again the high places which his father had destroyed, and reared altars to Baal, and worshipped the host of heaven (the sun, moon, and stars). 2 Kings xxi. 1-7, 16.

Q. How old was Josiah when he began to reign?

A. Eight years of age. 2 Kings xxii. 1.

Q. What was his character?

A. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. 2 Kings xxii. 2.

Q. Did he take means to repair the temple?

A. Yes; he ordered Hilkiah the priest to apply to that purpose the money received from the people

who came to the temple to worship. 2 Kings xxii. 3-7.

Q. While the workmen were repairing it, what book was found?

A. The book of the Law. 2 Kings xxii. 8.

Q. When read to the king, how was he affected by it?

A. He was greatly distressed, because he found that the anger of the Lord had been kindled against the nation, on account of the idolatries and other transgressions of the Law which had prevailed for many years. 2 Kings xxii. 11-13.

Q. Did he cause the book of the Law to be read to the people?

A. Yes; he caused the book to be read in the hearing of the priests and prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, both small and great. 2 Kings xxiii. 1, 2.

Q. What covenant did he make before the Lord?

A. To walk after the Lord, and keep his commandments. 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

Q. What course did he take in suppressing idolatry?

A. He collected the idolatrous vessels, and burned them, and he put down the idolatrous priests, and destroyed the altars and high places which former kings had made for the worship of false gods. And he caused the Passover to be celebrated with greater splendor than ever in former times. 2 Kings xxiii. 4-25.

Q. In whose reign did the king of Babylon first invade Judea?

A. In the reign of Jehoiakim. 2 Kings xxiv. 1.

Q. What is said to have been the cause of the afflictions of Judah?

A. The sins of Manasseh, and the innocent blood which he shed. 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.

Q. What was the fate of Jerusalem and the treasures of the temple during the reign of Jehoiachin, the next king?

A. Nebuchadnezzar took the king and carried him to Babylon. He also took the treasures of the Lord's house, and of the king's palace, and carried them away. He carried away also ten thousand captives, including all the principal inhabitants. 2 Kings xxiv. 10 - 16.

Q. What was the character of Jehoiachin?

A. Jehoiachin did, as his father had done, evil in the sight of the Lord. 2 Kings xxiv. 9.

Q. By whom was Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, placed on the throne?

A. By the king of Babylon. 2 Kings xxiv. 17.

Q. Did he pursue the evil course of his brother Jehoiachin?

A. Yes, he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like his predecessors, Jekoiakim and Jehoiachin. 2 Kings xxiv. 19.

Q. On his rebelling against the king of Babylon, what was done by Nebuchadnezzar?

A. He came and besieged the city two years, and took it. 2 Kings xxv. 1, 2.

Q. What was done with Zedekiah?

A. His sons were slain in his sight. His eyes were then put out, and he was bound with fetters of brass, and carried to Babylon. 2 Kings xxv. 7.

Q. What was the fate of Jerusalem after it was captured?

A. Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, came and burned the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem. 2 Kings xxv. 8–10.

Q. What was done with the prisoners, and who were left behind, and for what purpose?

A. He carried away the principal portion of the remaining inhabitants, but he left of the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen. 2 Kings xxv. 11, 12.

Q. What was done by the Babylonians with the furniture of the temple?

A. The vessels of brass, and such things as were of gold and silver, they either destroyed, or carried away. 2 Kings xxv. 13–17.

Q. How was Jehoiachin treated in his captivity?

A. After being a prisoner for thirty-seven years in Babylon, he was released from prison, and kindly treated by Evil-merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 Kings xxv. 27–30.

Q. How long did the Babylonish captivity continue?

A. Seventy years. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

LESSON XXII.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

Q. By whom was the city of Samaria built?

A. Omri bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer, and called the city which he built Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the former owner. 1 Kings xvi. 24.

Q. Of what kingdom was it the capital?

A. Of the kingdom of Israel.

Q. What was the character of Ahab, king of Israel?

A. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. 1 Kings xvi. 30.

Q. Who was his wife, and from what country?

A. Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Zidonians. 1 Kings xvi. 31.

Q. What heathen worship did he introduce into Samaria?

A. He reared an altar to Baal, in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32.

Q. How many kings reigned over Israel after the revolt of the ten tribes?

A. Nineteen.

Q. Can you mention some of their names?

A. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II., Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem,

Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea. 1 Kings xii. 20; xiv 20; xv. 33; xvi. 27; 2 Kings i. 17; x. 35; xvii. 1.

Q. What was their general character?

A. Corrupt and idolatrous; though Jehoash and Jeroboam II. were valiant kings, and kept their enemies, the Syrians, in check. 2 Kings xiii.

Q. Who was the last king of Israel?

A. Hoshea. 2 Kings xvii. 1.

Q. By whom was his kingdom invaded, and what was its fate?

A. It was invaded and conquered by the Assyrians, who carried away the inhabitants, and placed them in the Assyrian territories. 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6.

Q. Why were they subjected to the punishments inflicted upon them?

A. Because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, and adopted all their idolatrous practices. 2 Kings xvii. 7 – 18; xviii. 9 – 12.

Q. After the Israelites had been carried away into captivity, how was the land repeopled?

A. The king of Assyria brought people from the provinces of Assyria to inhabit the cities of Israel, in place of those whom he had carried away. 2 Kings xvii. 24.

Q. What was the character of the new inhabitants?

Q. They knew not the Lord, but worshipped idols.
 A. 2 Kings xvii. 25.

Q. To what did they attribute their exposure to the wild beasts which began to abound as soon as the country was depopulated?

A. They thought it a punishment sent by the god of the land, because they did not worship him acceptably. 2 Kings xvii. 26.

Q. Whom did the king of Assyria send to teach the inhabitants the religion of the country?

A. He ordered one of the priests of the country to be carried back, and employed to teach the people "the manner of the god of the land." 2 Kings xvii. 27, 28.

Q. Was the worship of Jehovah universal, or did they mingle with it the worship of false gods?

A. Every tribe of people made gods of their own, and worshipped them, while at the same time they acknowledged the God of Israel, and attempted to unite his worship with that of their false gods. 2 Kings xvii. 29 - 33.

Q. From whom were the Samaritans of our Saviour's time descended?

A. From these mixed tribes of Assyrians, united with the remnant of the Israelitish people who had remained after the conquest.

Q. What books of the Old Testament were regarded as sacred by the Samaritans?

A. The five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch.

LESSON XXIII.

THE PROPHETS.

Q. When the kingdoms of Judah and Israel fell away into idolatry, were there any who resisted this apostasy of their countrymen?

A. Yes; the prophets. 1 Kings xvii., xix., xxi.; 2 Kings ii.

Q. Besides foretelling future events, what was the great office of the prophets?

A. They were teachers of righteousness; they rebuked the sins of the people; they warned them of the penalties which would follow rebellion against God, and strove by exhortations, promises, and warnings to reclaim them from evil.

Q. Who was king of Israel when Elijah appeared?

A. Ahab. 1 Kings xvii. 1.

Q. How was Elijah treated by Ahab and Jezebel?

A. They persecuted him, and threatened his life, so that he was obliged to flee from them, and take refuge in the wilderness. 1 Kings xvii. 1-7; xix. 1-3.

Q. How did he rebuke Ahab for his sins?

A. When Ahab said to him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandment of the Lord, and followed Baal." 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18; xxi. 17-19.

Q. What vision had Elijah in Horeb?

A. He went to Horeb, the mount of God, and there, after the strong wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the still, small voice, as he stood at the mouth of the cave, his face wrapped in his mantle, the voice of the Lord came unto him. 1 Kings xix. 3 – 13.

Q. By what name is Elijah called in the New Testament?

A. Elias. It was a belief of the Jews that he should appear again on the earth, before the coming of the Messiah, so that when John appeared, preaching repentance, they asked him, "Art thou Elias?"

Q. Who was the successor of Elijah?

A. Elisha. 2 Kings ii. 11 – 13.

Q. What took place between Naaman the Syrian and Elisha?

A. Naaman was a person of high station in Syria, and a favorite of the king, but he was a leper. He had heard the fame of the prophet Elisha, and went to him, hoping to be cured of his leprosy. Elisha commanded him to wash himself in Jordan seven times, and he should be healed. At first, Naaman was angry at having so simple a remedy prescribed, but he obeyed the direction of the prophet, and his flesh came again "like unto the flesh of a child, and he was clean." He was very grateful, and offered rich presents to Elisha, but they were refused. 2 Kings v.

Q. Can you name some of the other prophets who appeared among the Israelites?

A. Amos, who lived during the reign of Jeroboam II. and Hosea, not long before the destruction of the kingdom.

Q. What prophets appeared in the kingdom of Judah?

A. Micah, Nahum, Joel, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

Q. What prophets appeared after the captivity?

A. Daniel, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.



LESSON XXIV.

DANIEL.

Q. On the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, who of the royal family were selected to be educated as servants of the king?

A. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Dan. i. 6, 7.

Q. Why did they refuse to eat the luxuries provided by the royal officers?

A. Because the law of Moses was very strict in its directions as to food, and the provisions served up to the king of Babylon contained, doubtless, many things which the Jews were not allowed to eat. Dan. i. 8.

Q. At the end of three years, when brought before the king, how were they received ?

A. The king found them superior in wisdom to all the magicians and astrologers of his realm. Dan. i. 17 – 20.

Q. What brought Daniel particularly into the notice of the king ?

A. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which none of his wise men understood, but which Daniel interpreted to him. Dan. ii. 1 – 24.

Q. What was the dream ?

A. The king saw in his dream a great image, whose head was of gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his body and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet of iron and clay. Then a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, struck the image and crushed it, so that the gold, iron, clay, &c. became as chaff, and the wind carried them away. But the stone became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Dan. ii. 31 – 35.

Q. What was the interpretation ?

A. King Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold ; after him should another kingdom arise, inferior to his, and a third still inferior, which were foreshown by the breast and body of the image, of silver and brass. The fourth kingdom was to be of iron, and break in pieces all the rest. But the legs and feet of the image, of clay and iron, were an intimation that the foundation was inse-

cure, and a fifth kingdom, denoted by the stone cut from the mountain, should consume all these kingdoms and should stand for ever. Dan. ii. 36 – 45.

Q. How were Daniel and his companions treated by Nebuchadnezzar?

A. The king placed Daniel as ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and Daniel spoke to the king for his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and he promoted them to office, but Daniel was more particularly distinguished. Dan. ii. 48, 49.

Q. What did the king set up in the plain of Dura?

A. An image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth six cubits; perhaps a column with an image on the summit. Dan. iii. 1.

Q. What did he require of the people assembled?

A. That they should worship the golden image. Dan. iii. 2 – 7.

Q. Who refused?

A. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Dan. iii. 8 – 12.

Q. What punishment did the king threaten to inflict on them unless they worshipped?

A. They were to be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace. Dan. iii. 13 – 15.

Q. What was their answer?

A. They said, "If it be so, our God, whom we revere, is able to deliver us." Dan. iii. 16 – 18.

Q. Were his threats carried into execution ?

A. The king was very angry, and commanded that they should be bound and cast into the furnace. Dan. iii. 19 - 23.

Q. What happened after they were cast into the furnace ?

A. They fell down bound into the midst of the furnace, but immediately the king, looking in, saw them loose, walking in the midst of the fire, with a fourth of a celestial appearance. Dan. iii. 24 - 28.

Q. What new decree was made in their favor ?

A. That any people whatsoever, that should speak evil of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should be severely punished, "because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort." Dan. iii. 29, 30.

Q. What account is given of Belshazzar's feast ?

A. Belshazzar was a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. During his reign he made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and, when heated with wine, he commanded to be brought the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, that he and his guests might drink from them. These vessels, dedicated to the worship of the true God, Belshazzar and his princes used for themselves, and even in worship of their gods of gold and silver, of brass and iron, of wood and stone. Dan. v. 1 - 4.

Q. What appeared on the wall ?

A. An appearance as of a man's hand, which wrote upon the wall. Dan. v. 5, 6.

Q. Were his wise men able to interpret the hand-writing ?

A. They could not read the writing, nor make known its meaning. Dan. v. 7 - 9.

Q. Who was sent for ?

A. Daniel, who appears to have been neglected and almost forgotten by the king and his princes during their prosperity and security, now was recollected as being the only person likely to understand the writing. Dan. v. 10 - 13.

Q. What answer did he give to the king's promise of reward ?

A. "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to others ; yet I will read the writing and make known the interpretation." Dan. v. 17.

Q. What did Daniel say was the reason of the calamities sent on Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar ?

A. Nebuchadnezzar's heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened with pride. Belshazzar was equally proud, and had added to his sins that of profaning the vessels of the Lord's house, by using them in idolatrous worship. Dan. v. 18 - 23.

Q. What was the writing on the wall ?

A. Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Dan. v. 25.

Q. What was its interpretation ?

- **A** Daniel interpreted the whole sentence to mean, “ God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Dan. v. 26 – 29.

Q. What befell Babylon the same night ?

A. In that night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom. Dan. v. 30, 31.

Q. How was Daniel treated by Darius ?

A. Darius set over the kingdom three presidents, of whom Daniel was made the chief. Dan. vi. 1 – 3.

Q. Did the favor which he enjoyed excite any jealousy against him ?

A. Yes ; the other presidents and the princes sought to find occasion against him, but they could not, for he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. Dan. vi. 4, 5.

Q. What decree did they persuade the king to make, in order to ruin Daniel ?

A. That whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of the king, should be cast into the den of lions. Dan. vi. 5 – 9.

Q. Was Daniel faithful to the God of his fathers ?

A. Yes ; though he knew that the decree was made, he went into his chamber, and, his windows being opened toward Jerusalem, he prayed three times a day, as was his custom. Dan. vi. 10, 11.

Q. What punishment was inflicted on Daniel ?

A. He was cast into the den of lions. Dan. vi. 12 – 17.

Q. Was the king reluctant to have the punishment executed ?

A. He was ; but it was the constitution of that country, that “the law of the Medes and Persians altereth not” ; that is, a law once made with the usual formalities could not be changed by the king, at his mere will and pleasure.

Q. On visiting the den of lions what took place ?

A. The king cried out unto Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions ? ” Dan. vi. 20, 21.

Q. Was Daniel saved from death ?

A. Daniel answered, “ O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.” Dan. vi. 21 – 23.

Q. Did these events cause Jehovah to be held in honor ?

A. The king made a decree, that in every part of his kingdom the God of Daniel should be held in fear, “ for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever.” Dan. vi. 25 – 27.

Q. After the death of Darius, what treatment did Daniel receive from Cyrus ?

A. Daniel was held in honor in the reign of Darius, and in that of Cyrus, who succeeded him. Dan. vi. 28.

LESSON XXV.

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

Q. Were the Jews regarded with favor by Cyrus?

A. Yes; in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, he issued a proclamation to all the people of the Hebrew nation residing in his kingdom, giving them liberty to go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of the Lord, which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. He also ordered all his own people to befriend them, and to assist them with silver and gold, and with goods and with beasts. Ezra i. 1-4.

Q. What was done by Cyrus with the vessels of the temple which had been brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar?

A. They were restored. Ezra i. 7-11.

Q. How many at this time returned to Judea?

A. 42,360, besides servants, male and female,—in all about 50,000 persons. Ezra ii. 64, 65.

Q. What took place after their return from captivity?

A. When the seventh month was come, the people came together at Jerusalem, and set up the altar and offered burnt-offerings thereon. They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles. Ezra iii. 1-4.

Q. What next did they begin to build?

A. In the second year after their arrival they began to rebuild the temple. Ezra ii. 7-9.

Q. What took place when the foundation of the temple was laid ?

A. The priests and the Levites sung together the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, “ giving thanks unto the Lord, because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.” And the people shouted with a great shout, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra iii. 10, 11.

Q. How were the old men, who had seen the former temple, affected ?

A. The old men who had seen the former house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, for they contrasted the splendor of the ancient temple of Solomon with their present feeble ability, and despaired of ever being able to erect an edifice worthy to take the place of that which they had lost. Ezra iii. 12, 13.

Q. Was any attempt made by their Samaritan neighbors to obstruct the building of the wall ?

A. They endeavored to excite the suspicions of Artaxerxes against the Jews. They sent him a letter, informing him that the Jews were rebuilding the bad and rebellious city, and if they were permitted to rebuild the walls, and strengthen themselves, they would refuse to pay tribute, and so the king would lose his revenue. Ezra iv. 11 – 16.

Q. Was the further building of the temple forbidden by Artaxerxes ?

A. Yes ; they were compelled to stop the building, and it ceased until the second year of Darius, that is, about three years. Ezra iv. 23, 24.

Q. By whom was it renewed ?

A. Zerubbabel, a prince of the lineage of David, encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, whose writings we have in the Bible, began again the work of building the temple, without asking the consent of the Persian king. Ezra v. 1, 2.

Q. Was its progress still opposed ?

A. The same enemies tried to interrupt the work, but were unable to prevent its progress until an order should be received from Darius. So the whole matter was referred to the king for his decision. Ezra v. 3 – 5.

Q. Did Darius respect the decree of Cyrus ?

A. Darius caused search to be made in the records of the kingdom for the decree that Cyrus had issued, and having found it and become satisfied that the Jews had done nothing beyond what they had been authorized to do in rebuilding their city and temple, he confirmed the decree, and commanded his governors to assist the people, with money, and with supplies such as were needful. Ezra vi. 1 – 12.

Q. Who was king of Persia when the temple was completed ?

A. Darius. Ezra vi. 13 – 15.

Q. Who was leader of the next body of Jews who returned from the captivity.

A. About sixty years after the first captives returned with Zerubbabel, a second party went under the guidance of Ezra the priest. Ezra vii. 1 – 10.

Q. What was still the condition of the city of Jerusalem?

A. The few returned exiles, the remnant of the captivity, were in great affliction and discouragement; the wall of the city lay in the state in which it had been left by Nebuchadnezzar's armies, broken down and its gates burnt with fire. Neh. i. 1 – 3.

Q. In whose reign did Nehemiah live?

A. In that of Artaxerxes, and his return to Jerusalem was a few years after that of Ezra. Neh. ii. 1.

Q. Did the king grant him permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

A. Yes; and gave him a letter to the king's officers, to supply him with timber from the king's forests, to aid him in the work. Neh. ii. 1 – 8.

Q. What did he find the condition of the walls to be?

A. Obliged to be cautious, because of the old enemies of the Jews, he rose in the night, and rode round the city, and viewed the walls, which lay in ruins, with the wood-work burnt and blackened with fire. Neh. ii. 12 – 16.

Q. Did the Samaritans continue their opposition?

A. Yes; they scoffed, and said, "What are these

feeble Jews doing? will they fortify themselves?" Then another said, "That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall." Neh. iv. 1-6.

Q. While the people labored on the wall, what course was taken by Nehemiah for their defence?

A. Behind the wall, and on the higher places, so as to give advantage to the archers, he arrayed his people, armed with their swords, their spears, and their bows. So half of the people wrought in the work, and the other half of them held the weapons. Neh. iv. 13-23.

Q. After the wall was finished, what is said of the reading of the Law by Ezra.

A. In the sight of all the people he opened the book of the Law, and blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped. And Ezra and the priests "read in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." Neh. viii. 1-9.

Q. Were the people disposed to reform and to obey the Law?

A. The people wept when they heard the words of the Law, for they were very conscious how much they had departed from it during the time of the captivity. But Nehemiah encouraged them, and as the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, he directed them to prepare for it; which they did. And hav-

ing made booths, they dwelt under them, and kept the feast for seven days, hearing the Law read every day ; and there was very great gladness. Neh. viii. 9-13 ; ix. 1-3.

Q. By whom were still further reforms made ?

A. By Nehemiah. Neh. xiii.



LESSON XXVI.

THE PSALMS.

AFTER the lapse of three thousand years the Psalms still express, better than any words except those of our Saviour, the most profound and varied emotions of the devout heart. There is no depth of remorse or penitence, and no height of trust or joy, to which they do not give utterance. And thus, both by expressing and by promoting sentiments of gratitude, trust, and submission, they have become associated with the best religious life of the Christian world.

The Psalms are lyrical poems. English poetry is distinguished in its form from prose by rhyme and measure. Instead of these, the Hebrew poetry had a different and peculiar structure, called Parallelism. This appears under somewhat different forms, and with different degrees of distinctness ; but in substance it consists in the repetition of essentially the same idea in the successive lines or clauses of a stanza or sentence. The correspondence of the lines in form and idea create a certain kind of rhythm. The nineteenth Psalm furnishes a good example :—

“ The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament sheweth his handiwork ;
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.”

The collection of Psalms consists of one hundred and fifty. The ninetieth is attributed to Moses. If he was its author, it is more than four hundred years older than any other in the collection. The occasion is supposed to have been the mournful mortality of the Israelites in the wilderness.

About one third are attributed to David. They relate to his early life; to his persecutions endured at the hand of Saul; to the establishment of the national worship; his sin in the matter of Uriah, and repentance; his flight from Absalom; the retrospect of his life, and thanksgiving for God's interpositions in his favor. If one will read them remembering the time when they were written, and the circumstances which surrounded David, their meaning and their great beauty will be much more apparent. Of the remaining Psalms, some are ascribed to Solomon and his times; some to the times of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah; while others appeared at successive intervals, as late as the captivity, and the times subsequent to the return from Babylon. If read in their order, they would constitute a lyrical history of the Hebrew nation, from the time of David until after the restoration from captivity.

David's early occupation was that of a shepherd. This fact gives a peculiar significance to such Psalms as, "The heavens declare the glory of God," or, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" which seem to be the irrepressible outbursting of devout emotions, on viewing the wonderful works of Providence. "The Lord is my shepherd," we can hardly help thinking, must have been suggested while viewing in a time of trouble some pastoral scene, covered with flocks fed and cared for by Providence.

The Hebrew mode of celebrating religious worship was arranged and methodized by David and Solomon, and to this several of the Psalms relate. The twenty-fourth is supposed to have been prepared on the occasion of bringing in the ark to the tabernacle or to the temple. It begins with the great truth, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that is therein", yet

Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth, hath chosen a place where he is to be worshipped, and as this glorious, heavenly king enters the sanctuary, it is personified and exhorted to receive him worthily. The Psalm is adapted, as others were, to be sung by responsive choirs. The first choir sings, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." The second choir responds, "Who is this King of glory?" The first, or perhaps both unitedly, answer, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Ps. cxxxvii., "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept," carries us into the midst of the memories, the sufferings, and the scenes of the captivity.

The Psalms descriptive of natural scenes are extremely beautiful. As, for example, the twenty-ninth, which was apparently suggested by a thunder-storm; and the sixty-fifth, which draws a lesson of trust in God, from a view of his works. But few are more remarkable than the hundred and fourth and the hundred and thirty-ninth. The former, which demonstrates the glory of the Creator from the wisdom, beauty, and variety of the creation, we may imagine to have been written in the midst of some sylvan scene, alive with sights and sounds of happiness; while the latter would seem to have been composed in the silence and solitude of night, when no outward object drew off the thoughts of its author from the mystery of his own nature, and the awful majesty of God.

Q. Who was the principal author of the Psalms?

A. David; who not only wrote a large part of them himself, but whose Psalms served as a model to those who came after him.

Q. Through what period of Jewish history do the Psalms extend?

A. Through five hundred years,— from the beginning of David's career, until after the return of the people from captivity.

Q. By whom is the ninetieth Psalm supposed to have been written?

A. By Moses, when he saw the people whom he had led out of Egypt passing away by death, and was told that neither he nor they should enter the promised land.

Q. To what time in David's life may we refer the Psalm beginning, "The heavens declare the glory of God"? (Ps. xix.)

A. To the time when he was a shepherd, when he watched his flock by night in the fields under the stars of heaven.

Q. When is Psalm xxiii.—"The Lord is my shepherd"—supposed to have been written?

A. When David was fleeing from his son Absalom, and had crossed the Jordan, and come to a country of pastures and flocks.

Q. What appears to have been the occasion of the twenty-fourth Psalm?

A. The bringing of the ark into the tabernacle or temple.

Q. Under what circumstances was the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm composed?

Q. What is the subject of the twenty-ninth Psalm?

Q. What is the subject of the sixty-fifth Psalm?

A. In contrast to the twenty-ninth, which describes a

thunder-storm, it presents the most pleasing and beneficent aspects of God's power. "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice ; thou visitest the earth and waterest it ; thou makest it soft with showers ; thou blessest the springing thereof ; thou crownest the year with thy goodness."

Q. What do the Psalms teach of the unity of God ?

Ps. cv.

Q. What of his eternity and unchangeableness ?

Ps. cii. 25-27.

Q. What of his omnipresence and omniscience ?

Ps. cxxxix. 1-12.

Q. What of his beneficence ? Ps. xxiii. 1-6 ; ciii.

1-14 ; cxi. 1-8.

Q. What of the kind of life required as the condition of securing his favor ? Ps. xv. 1-5.



LESSON XXVII.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Q. Can you name the books of the Old Testament in their order ?

A. Genesis,	Deuteronomy,	1 Samuel,
Exodus,	Joshua,	2 Samuel,
Leviticus,	Judges,	1 Kings,
Numbers,	Ruth,	2 Kings,

1 Chronicles,	Song of Solomon,	Obadiah,
2 Chronicles,	Isaiah,	Jonah,
Ezra,	Jeremiah,	Micah,
Nehemiah,	Lamentations,	Nahum,
Esther,	Ezekiel,	Habakkuk,
Job,	Daniel,	Zephaniah,
Psalms,	Hosea,	Haggai,
Proverbs,	Joel,	Zechariah,
Ecclesiastes,	Amos,	Malachi.

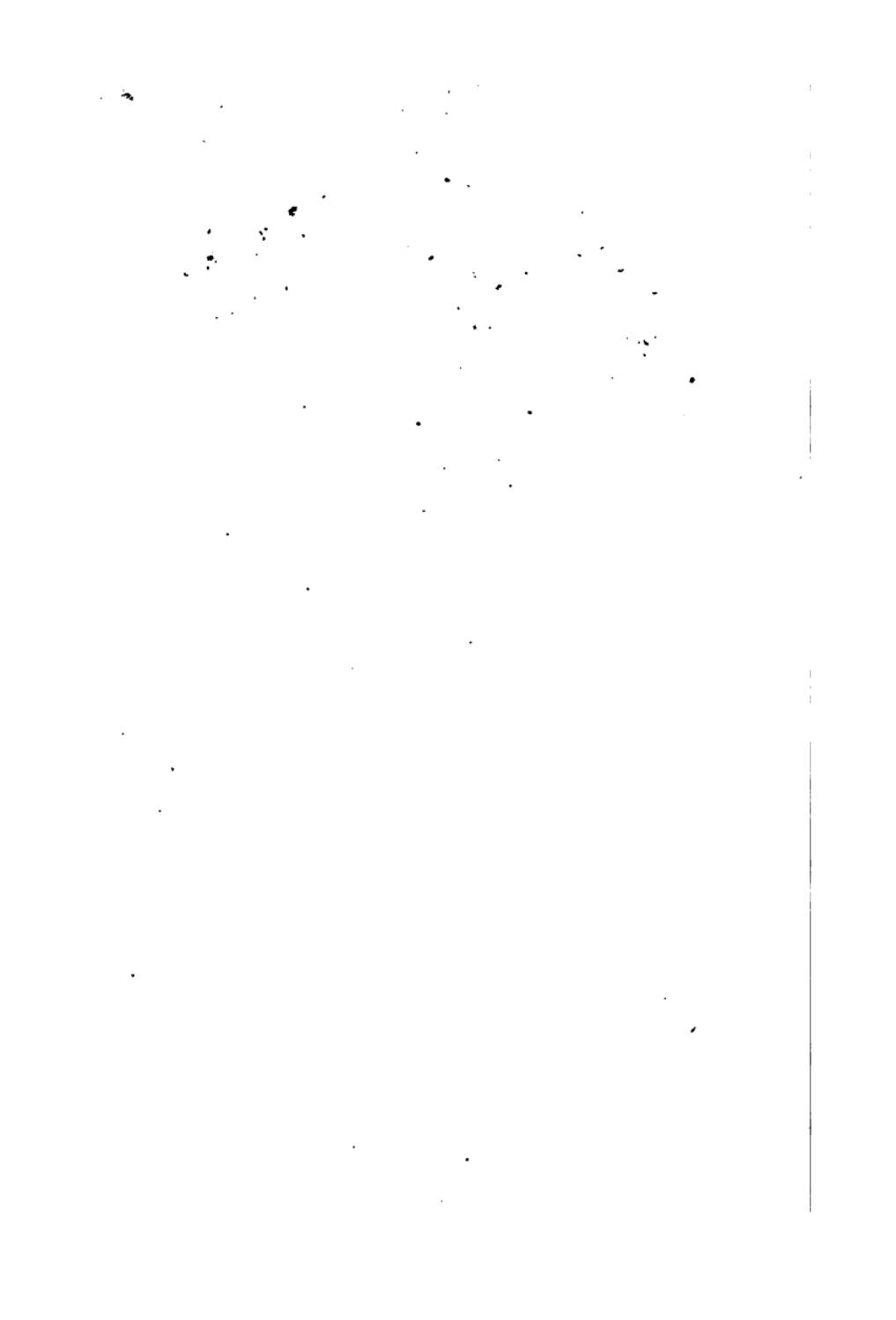
INTERVAL FROM MALACHI TO THE COMING OF CHRIST.

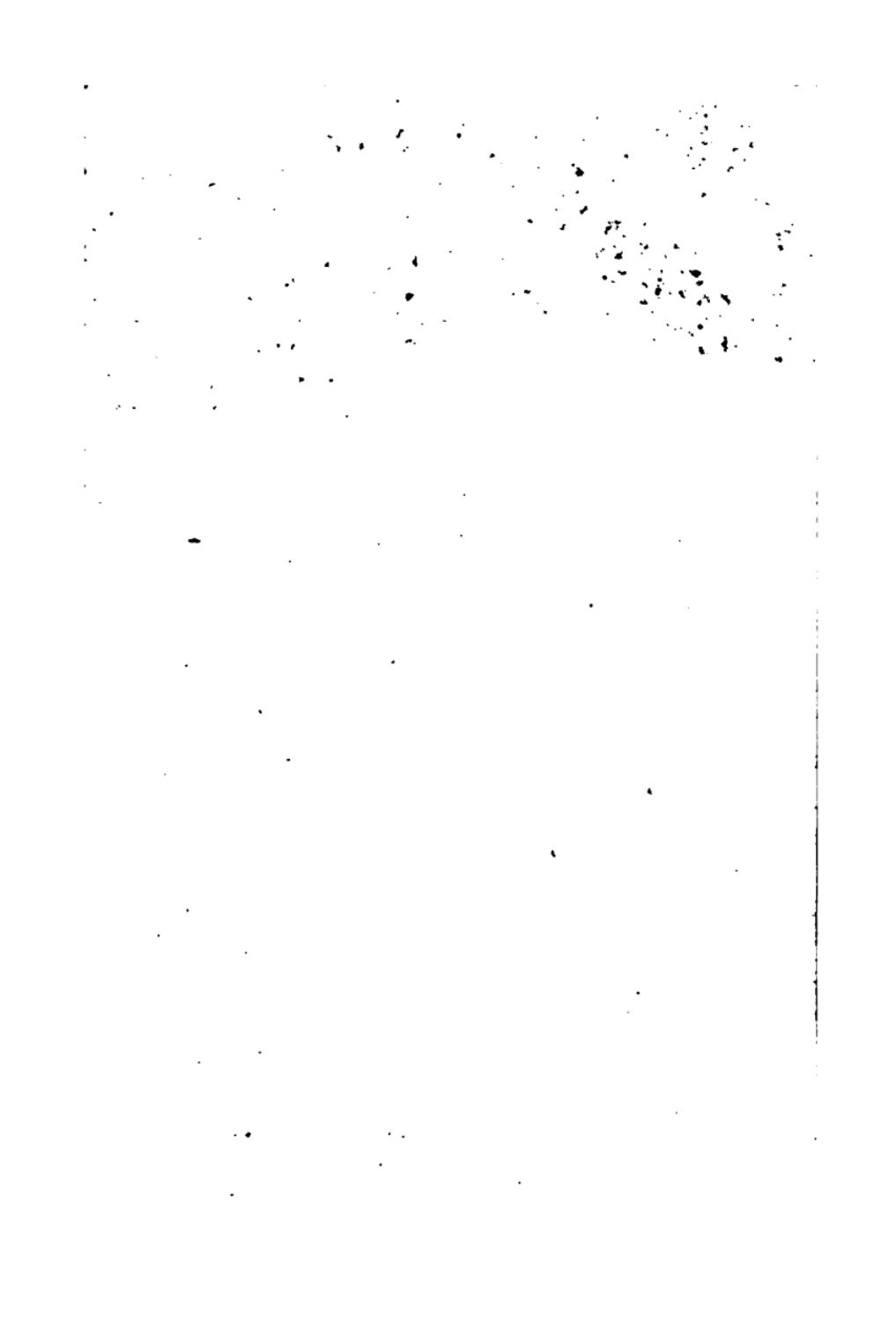
FROM the time of Nehemiah, the last of the Jewish governors, and of Malachi, the last of the prophets, to the birth of Jesus Christ, was over four hundred years. During this period, the Jews were held in subjection by the kings of Persia, until the destruction of the Persian monarchy by Alexander the Great. They were governed immediately by their high-priests, who were themselves, however, subject to the Persian governors of Syria. During this period, and until the death of Alexander, the Jews enjoyed an almost uninterrupted peace, and made great progress both in population and prosperity. Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt, the sacred writings were collected, and synagogues and schools for expounding the Law and for the instruction of the people were established. After the death of Alexander, they became involved in the wars which arose between his successors, and were brought under the rule of the kings of Egypt. But on the whole, for a long period, their condition was not one of any peculiar hardship. Ptolemy, on taking possession of Palestine, allowed them the enjoyment of their customs, and granted to the Jewish colonists whom he transplanted to Alex-

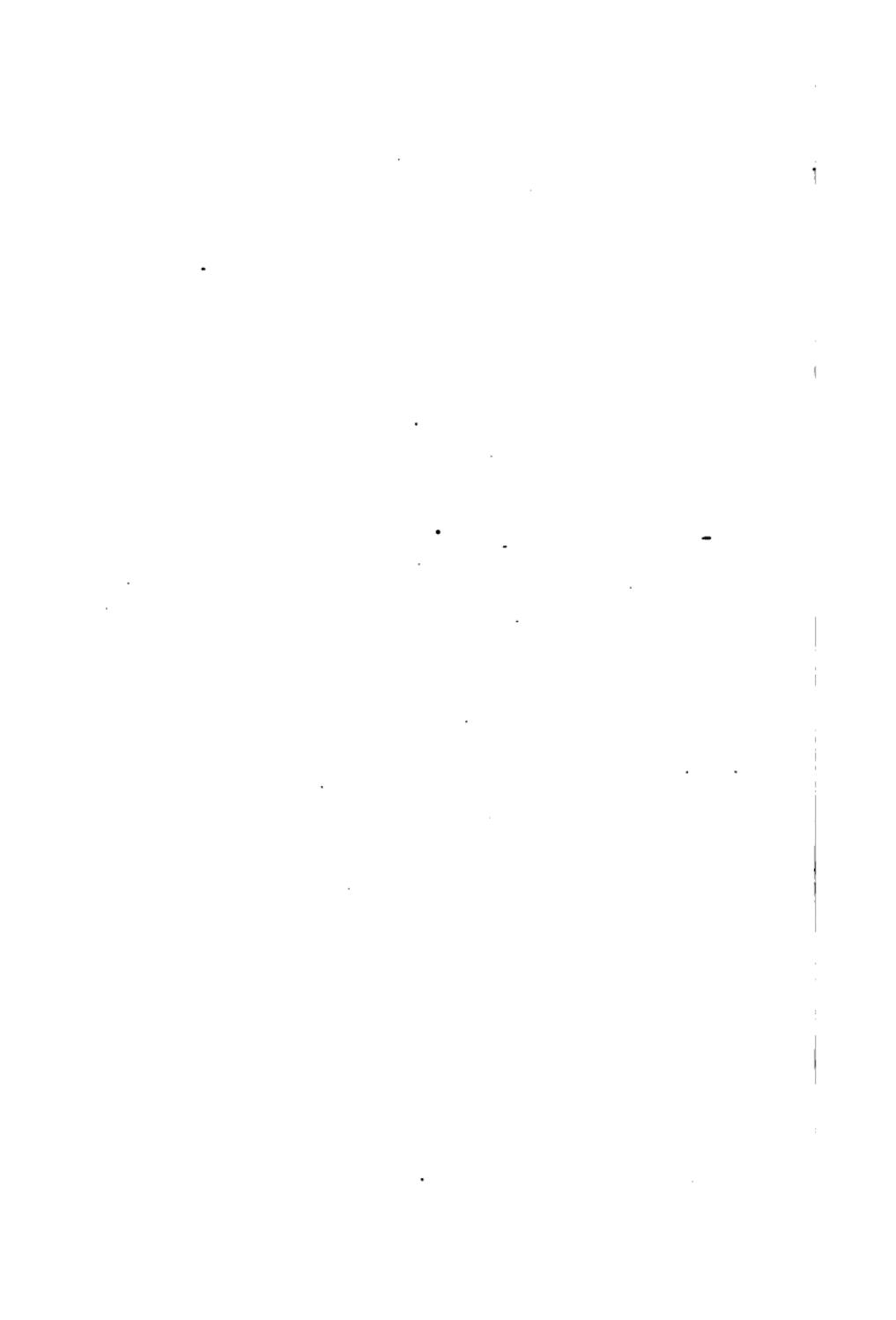
andria peculiar privileges. About two hundred years before Christ, they came under the dominion of the kings of Syria. This change of masters was followed by a long history of hardships and cruelties. Antiochus Epiphanes, in order to reduce the Jews to a uniformity with the rest of his subjects, determined to abolish their religion. But, in spite of all his efforts, they adhered to the forms of the Mosaic worship. In endeavoring to accomplish his object, Antiochus subjected the Jews to one of the most horrible persecutions of which history makes mention. Jerusalem and the surrounding country were laid waste. The statue of Jupiter was set up in the temple for worship, and the Jews were required to sacrifice and eat swine. But persecution only served to awaken the national spirit, and many suffered the most terrible death rather than transgress the Law of Moses. At length broke out the insurrection of the Maccabees. Judas Maccabæus, having collected a band of faithful believers, defeated the Syrians, took Jerusalem, and restored the Mosaic worship. Judas, himself one of the greatest men of Israelitish history, was one of a family of heroes. He, his brothers, and their successors, maintained a war, remarkable for its heroic courage and achievements, for more than twenty years, against Antiochus and his successors on the throne of Syria, and finally succeeded in delivering their country from the Syrian yoke, and in establishing its independence. One hundred and thirty-five years before Christ they formed an alliance with the Romans, and for many years the nation made rapid advances in prosperity and civilization. During this period the Sanhedrim was established, and the three great sects — Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes — made their appearance. The princes of this family formed the Asmonæan dynasty, — so called from Mattathias, its founder, whose surname was Asmon. They were also called Maccabees, from the name taken by Judas, who succeeded his father, Mattathias. Uniting in themselves the power both of high-priest and king, they governed the Jews during one hundred and twenty-six years. Sixty-three years before Christ, the Romans, taking advantage of a

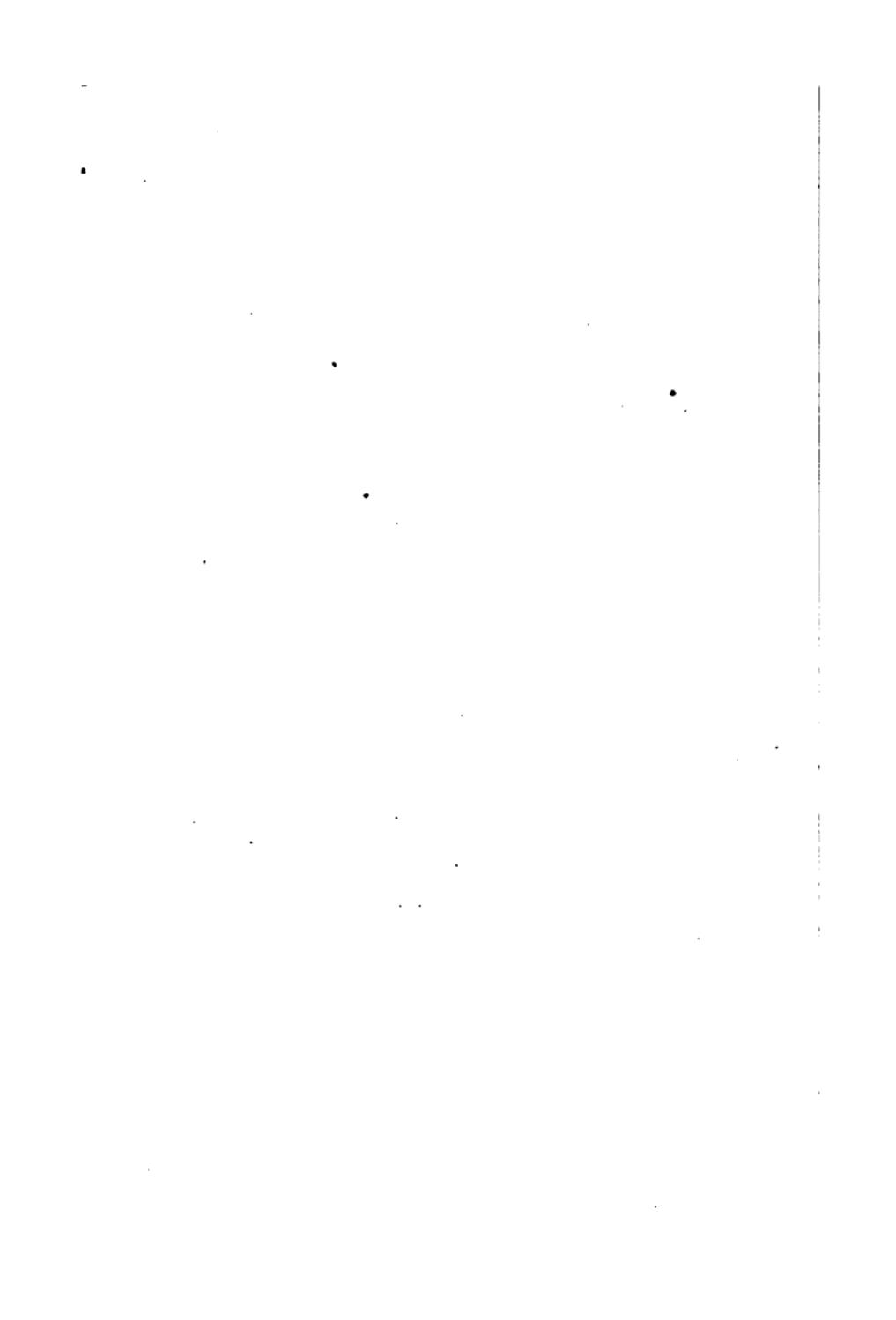
contest between two brothers, who each claimed the succession, conquered Judea, and reduced it to a dependency of the Roman Empire. Jerusalem lost its walls, the nation its independence, and the family of the Maccabees its royal dignity. After a series of ineffectual efforts to throw off the Roman yoke, thirty-five years before Christ, the last of the Maccabees was put to death, and a new sovereign, of Idumæan origin, descended from a Jewish proselyte, was installed in his place. This was Herod the Great, who obtained from the Romans the rank of prince, and afterwards that of king of the Jews. His slight regard for the Jewish faith made the chief men who were dependent on him indifferent to their ancient religion; the oppression of the Romans excited among the people a general discontent; the Mosaic worship degenerated more and more into a mere form, and the licentiousness of the court spread its contaminations among all classes of the people. During the reign of Herod, and amidst such circumstances, Christ was born. The history of many of the events, and a vivid picture of the condition of the Jewish people, may be found in what is termed the Apocrypha.

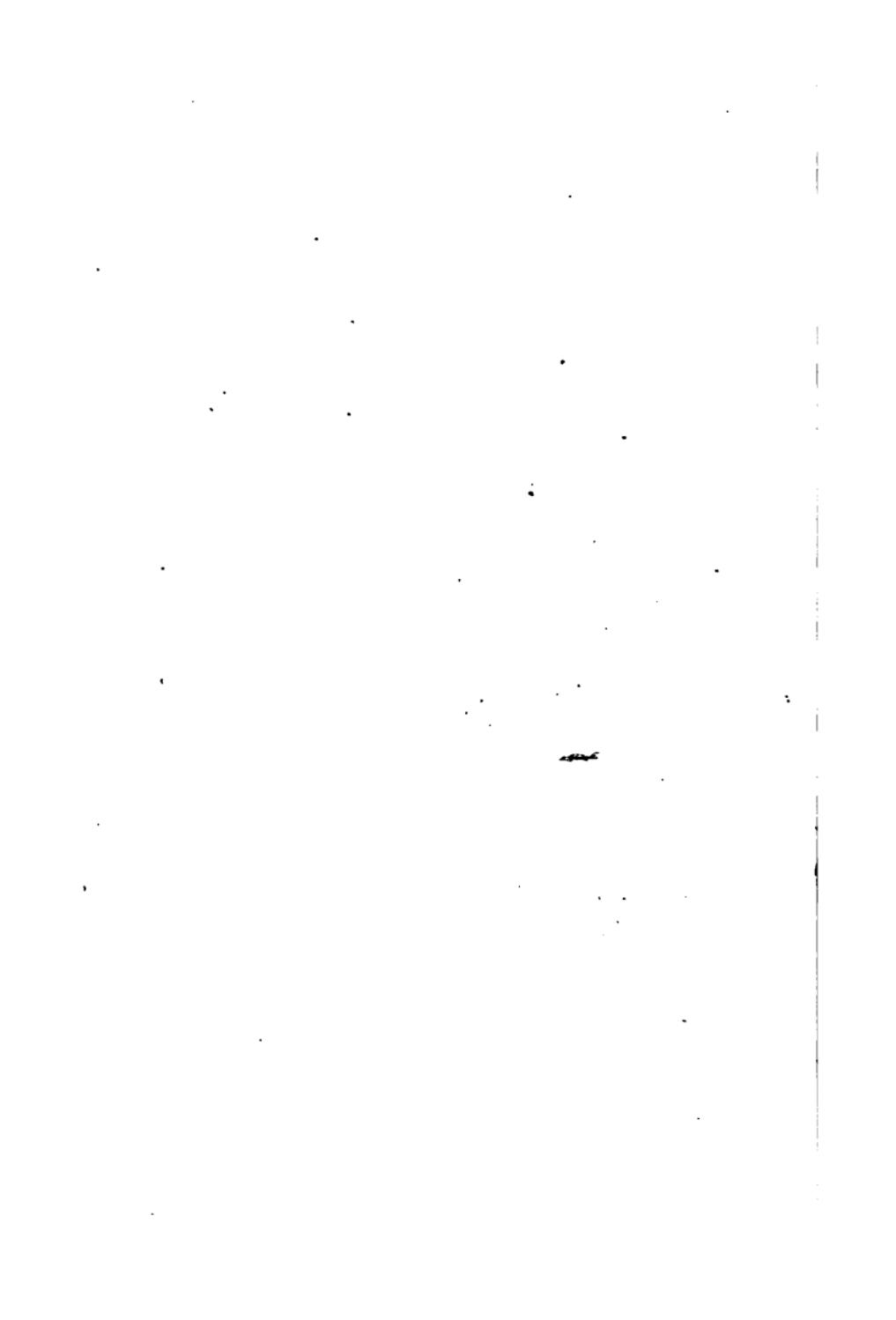
THE APOCRYPHA. — The apocryphal books of the Old Testament were composed, for the most part, a long time after the death of Malachi, the last of the prophets; they are never cited by Jesus Christ, nor by his Apostles, and the Jews did not include them among the number of their sacred books. But as the records of an important period of Jewish history, and as showing the condition of the Jewish people and the Jewish mind, they possess a great and permanent value; while no uninspired moral writings that have come down to us from antiquity are more remarkable for reach of thought, for the frequent sublimity of moral sentiment, and the varied practical wisdom which they display, than the books of *Ecclesiasticus* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

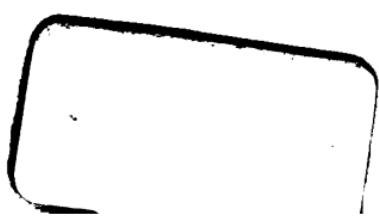












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